



UNIVERSITY OF
BIRMINGHAM
SCHOOL

YEAR 9 PATHWAYS

University of Birmingham School



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Your Pathway Options

You are now at a point in School where you will need to choose your option subjects for Year 10 and 11. This booklet is designed to help you, and your family, in that process. Choosing your GCSE subjects is an important time for you and it is an exciting time, but you may find some of those decisions tricky. There is a lot of support and advice available to help you. This booklet, along with the online materials provided for you, are the best places to start. Your subject teachers, your tutor, your Year Lead, Pastoral Manager, and other members of staff across our School are also available to offer you advice.

Please read this booklet carefully along with the online videos which have been provided for you.

Key dates for you to remember:

- Year 9 Parents' Evening: Thursday 14 March 2024.
- Final Subject Choice Deadline: Wednesday 10 April 2024.

I hope you find this booklet informative and useful and I wish you all the best as you carefully consider your GCSE options.



Mr A Reeves

Senior Assistant Vice Principal, Curriculum and Assessment.



Our Curriculum

University of Birmingham School provides a broad and balanced curriculum which engages and challenges our pupils, so that they achieve the best possible range of qualifications to enable their future aspirations to be fulfilled. The curriculum is designed to offer pupils a diverse and coherent choice of courses and learning experiences, so that they develop skills and knowledge that remain with them long after examinations. Our pupils leave school as confident and independent learners, equipped with both the qualifications and the transferable skills needed.

What qualifications do we offer?

The majority of courses that pupils will follow in Key Stage 4 are accredited, which means pupils achieve a qualification that is externally recognised. These qualifications are called level 1 or level 2 awards. Level 1 qualifications include GCSEs at grades 3-1 (D-G using the old grading system). Level 2 qualifications include GCSEs at grades 9-4 (A*-C using the old grading system) as well as some of the Technical Certificate and Cambridge National courses that are on offer.

GCSE courses are now largely exam based, except in particular subjects. GCSE courses use a numbered grade system ranging from 9 at the top to 1 at the bottom (a grade 8 is broadly what an A* used to be, a Grade 4 is broadly what a Grade C used to be).

We also offer three vocational courses. Vocational courses are GCSE equivalents, meaning the qualifications are considered as having the same value as GCSEs. Vocational courses are examined using both non-examined assessment (coursework) and examinations. These courses are measured at a Distinction*, Distinction, Merit, Pass or Fail.

The Core Curriculum

All pupils follow the core curriculum:

Subject	English	Mathematics	Science	Core PE	PLAD*	Enrichment
Hours per fortnight	8	8	12	2	2	4
Qualifications	2 GCSEs**	1 GCSE	2-3 GCSEs***	N/A	N/A	N/A

*Personal learning and development.

**All pupils study GCSE English Language and English Literature.

***Pupils follow one of two science pathways:

- (1) Triple Award leading to three separate GCSEs in Biology, Chemistry, and Physics.
- (2) Combined Science leading to a double GCSE award.

The English Baccalaureate

Pupils are being encouraged by the Government to follow courses in subject areas that lead to the English Baccalaureate.

The subjects are:

- GCSE English Language or GCSE English Literature.
- GCSE Mathematics.
- GCSE Combined or Triple Science (GCSE Computer Science can also be counted).
- GCSE Foreign Language.
- GCSE Geography or GCSE History.

In order to meet the English Baccalaureate standard, pupils must gain a pass in all of these 5 subject areas. This pathway is now regarded as the 'gold standard' nationally and contains an excellent balance of subjects. Universities in particular value applications which include the English Baccalaureate. Our strong advice is that pupils should study this range of subjects as part of their option choices.

The importance of English and mathematics

English and mathematics have always been a part of the core curriculum and regarded as fundamentally important for all pupils. The value of these subjects for progression at all levels has continued to increase in recent years. For example, achieving grades 9-5 in English and maths is currently part of the entry requirement to the University of Birmingham School Sixth Form and some level 3 college courses, as well as a universal entry requirement for all degree courses at the majority of universities.

Literacy and numeracy skills are also essential in any workplace and are highly regarded by employers. University of Birmingham School places great importance on supporting pupils to achieve the best possible outcomes in English and mathematics.

Science

Pupils will either study Triple Science (Biology, Chemistry, and Physics separately) or Combined Science. Pupils studying Combined Science will still study Biology, Chemistry, and Physics and be examined in all three areas, but will achieve a Double Grade in Science overall. Pupils will be told whether they are studying Triple Sciences or Combined Science. Pupils interested in studying medicine or medical-related qualifications at Higher Education can still do so by studying Combined Science.

Enrichment

Enrichment remains an important part of our core curriculum in Years 10 and 11. In enrichment time, pupils get the chance to explore something new, discover a passion or purpose they never knew existed, develop deeper relationships with peers and school staff, and enrich their wider understanding of the world they live in. Pupils can also talk about their enrichment in future applications.

Curriculum Pathways

All pupils will have the opportunity to choose three optional subjects from a range of academic and vocational qualifications. Using our knowledge of each individual pupil's aspirations and learning preferences, pupils are guided to one of three core curriculum pathways to maximise their achievement, engagement, and enjoyment during Key Stage 4 and best prepare them for progression post-16. Pupils will receive a personalised options form that makes it clear which pathway they will follow. The three pathways are:

Pathway A

Pupils who learn best through a vocational context and enjoy a practical style of learning are guided to this pathway. As part of their timetable, pupils will have five lessons per fortnight to follow a personalised study programme to maximise achievement in key subjects. The nature of the personalised study programme will depend on each pupil's needs, but will include additional support in literacy and numeracy as these key skills are so crucial to future success. This blend of courses, together with English, Mathematics and Combined Science from the core curriculum, will give pupils the opportunity to achieve up to eight GCSE equivalent grades.

Pathway B

Pupils on this pathway will have three option choices from the full range of courses that are on offer, at least one of which will be either Geography or History (unless in exceptional circumstances). Pupils will also study French as part of our commitment to a broad and balanced curriculum. Together with English, Mathematics and Combined Science from the core curriculum, this pathway will give pupils the opportunity to achieve up to nine GCSEs. This approach aims to maximise the quality rather than the quantity of GCSE outcomes by making the demands of assessment throughout Key Stage 4 more manageable, especially at the end of Year 11 when pupils will have a large number of exams.

Pathway C

Pupils who we believe will confidently manage the demands of studying a large number of courses at Key Stage 4 will follow pathway C which allows three option choices from the full range of courses that are on offer from which we require students to choose a humanities subject from either Geography or History (unless in exceptional circumstances). Pupils will also study French which will together with English, Mathematics, and Triple Award Science from the core curriculum, give pupils the opportunity to achieve up to ten GCSEs.

Making Choices

Choosing your GCSE preferences is an exciting moment in your journey through education, and it may be the first time you feel you have real autonomy over the choices you can make. Fortunately, by offering the curriculum that we do, most destinations will still be ready and waiting for you in the future regardless of what subjects you choose, but it might be worth taking a moment to reflect on how you are going to make your choices before you commit to what you want to study.

The first question to ask yourself is: do you have a dream or idea about what you might want to do in the future? It doesn't matter if you don't, but if you do then this would be a good place to start. For example, to study Architecture at Cambridge University you are expected to demonstrate 'creativity' and 'curiosity' and provide a portfolio of your drawings, photographs and sketches and they suggest that Art would be a useful GCSE. If you want to study Medicine at University College London, you'll need a modern foreign language at GCSE at grade 5 or above.

Think about what you might want to do in the future. Use the 'Online Resources' section on page 5 to help you with this.

What if you don't know what you want to do in the future?

Not knowing what you want to do in the future isn't a problem at all. You have a long time to consider what career you may want to do. Consider these questions when thinking about your GCSEs:

- What do you enjoy?
- How is the course assessed (i.e. do you prefer exams or coursework)?
- What subjects are you good at?
- What subjects inspire you when you read this booklet and watch the online videos?
- Which subjects are you most curious about?
- Do you have a balance of subjects (i.e. can you demonstrate all of your skills across the subjects you are studying?)

Do not:

- Choose a subject because you like the teacher: they may not be teaching you.
- Choose a subject because your friends are doing it: you may not be in their class.

Set your sights high – be ambitious, open minded, and curious. Do your research.

GCSEs are a really important part of your future, but they are only a part of it. Getting the best grades you can is absolutely essential, and in many cases it is the development of character that underpins academic success. Make your choices carefully, and use the next few years wisely. Reflect on who you are becoming; find your purpose, be brave and bold and begin your journey to make the world a better place.

Finally and most importantly...

Please be aware that whilst we will do everything we can to match you up with the courses you want to study, there will be some limitations which mean we cannot guarantee you will get your chosen preferences. Some courses are likely to be very popular and therefore spaces may be limited (Photography, for example, tends to be oversubscribed). In some subjects, we are only able to offer a set number of places (for example, in Business Studies). German is a guided choice, so speak to Mrs Holleran (Subject Leader for Languages) if you are interested in studying this. This means:

- It is important to complete your Options Form by the deadline of the 10 April. Those pupils who miss this deadline will be placed into their classes after the rest of the cohort, so the chances of getting all of your chosen options will be lower.
- It is important to rank your preferences carefully. It may well be that we cannot meet your chosen top three options. In this case, we will look at your fourth choice (and in rare circumstances, we may need to look at your fifth choice). Make sure you consider and complete all five of your preferences and that these are subjects you'd like to study.

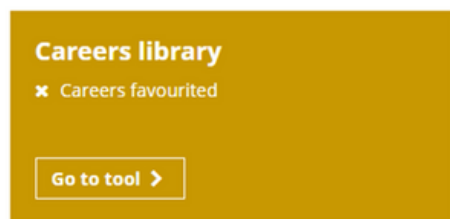
Online Resources

Please use these online resources to help you pick your options.



Unifrog

All pupils have an email from unifrog allowing you to set up an account. . If you don't have this, click <https://www.unifrog.org/sign-in> and use your school email address to create an account (click "forgotten password").



Careers Library

Use the Careers Library to search for any careers you are interested in hearing further about. For each career, you will find a profile with further information about it. You will also find entry requirements:

- GCSEs (or equivalent) at grades 9 to 4 (A* to C) in English and mathematics.

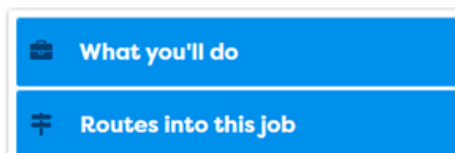


Careerpilot

Career Pilot is another useful site you can use. This does not require a log-in – just head to <https://www.careerpilot.org.uk>



Here, you will find quizzes to help make you consider future pathway options. If you click "Jobs" on the top bar, you will also find information about careers and what sorts of GCSEs you need to get into this career.

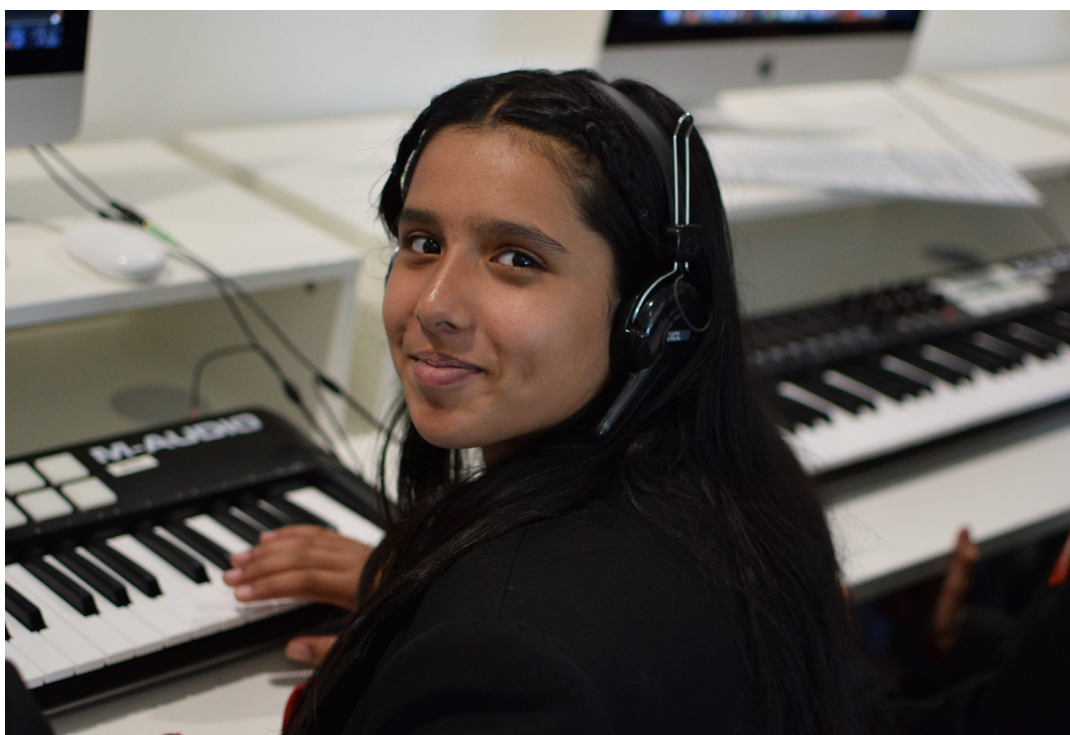


The vast majority of jobs do not specify certain GCSE qualifications. Most want to see a good range of GCSEs including English and mathematics. So if you're unsure what you want to do or you change your mind, the GCSE Pathways we have here will help you access almost every career.



Core Subjects

University of Birmingham School offers a broad academic curriculum, based around the core subjects of the national curriculum and the subjects regarded as being useful to support application and entry into employment, vocational training, and higher education (including into leading universities). Each subject is led by a well-qualified subject leader, supported by a team of inspiring teachers.



Biology

Pathway C only

Course Title: GCSE Biology

Exam Board: AQA

Course Specification: [Click here.](#)

What is the course like?

The AQA GCSE Biology course begins by covering the content in Year 9 from the following topics: Organisation, cell biology and infection & response. After each topic pupils will complete an end of topic test to help them to assess their own learning. As well as learning content we will be focusing on three main skills (knowledge & understanding, scientific communication and data analysis) during lessons, just as in Year 7, Year 8 and Year 9. The course includes a lot of practicals as well as theory. The practicals do not count towards the overall mark but are a required part of the course and there will be questions related to these practicals in the exam.

What will be studied?

The course covers seven main topics with something to suit everyone:

- Cell biology.
- Organisation.
- Infection and response.
- Bioenergetics.
- Homeostasis and response.
- Inheritance, variation and evolution.
- Ecology.

These topics are studied by both the biology and combined science course, with the biology GCSE course studying each topic in more depth.

As well as learning new content, pupils will complete 10 required practicals including: visualising cheek cells under a microscope, investigating the effect of different antiseptics on bacterial growth, and going outside to measure the biodiversity of species in a field.

How is it assessed?

There are two papers covering different topics:

Paper 1: assesses: Cell biology; organisation; infection and response; bioenergetics.

Paper 2: assesses: Homeostasis and response; inheritance, variation and evolution; ecology.

Both papers are 1 hour and 45 minutes long, are out of 100 marks and each make up 50% of the GCSE.

Questions in both papers include: multiple choice, structured, closed short answer and open response.

Chemistry

Pathway C only

Course Title: GCSE Chemistry

Exam Board: AQA

Course Specification: [Click here.](#)

What is the course like?

Year 9 pupils have already started studying some of the core concepts in the GCSE syllabus, including the structure of atoms and bonding in molecules. These concepts are the basis of the whole of chemistry.

Practical work is at the heart of chemistry, and pupils will continue to use the practical skills developed in KS3 to support and consolidate their theoretical understanding of chemistry, develop investigative skills, and master the use of specialist practical equipment and techniques.

What will be studied?

The course covers seven main topics with something to suit everyone:

- Atomic structure and the periodic table.
- Bonding, structure, and the properties of matter.
- Quantitative chemistry.
- Chemical changes.
- Energy changes.
- The rate and extent of chemical change.
- Organic chemistry.
- Chemical analysis.
- Chemistry of the atmosphere.
- Using resources.

These topics are studied by both the chemistry and combined science course, with the chemistry GCSE course studying each topic in more depth.

How is it assessed?

There are two exam papers covering different topics:

Paper 1: assesses: Atomic structure and the periodic table, bonding, structure, and the properties of matter, quantitative chemistry, chemical changes, energy changes.

Paper 2: assesses: The rate and extent of chemical change, organic chemistry, chemical analysis, chemistry of the atmosphere, using resources.

Both papers are 1 hour 45 minutes long, each make up 50% of the GCSE and contain a mixture of multiple choice, structured, closed short answer and open response.

There is no coursework, instead, pupils are required to complete eight required practicals during the course.

Physics

Pathway C only

Course Title: GCSE Physics

Exam Board: AQA

Course Specification: [Click here.](#)

What is the course like?

In this course, pupils will learn about the wonders of the universe, miniscule particles and everything in between, alongside the amazing technological inventions we rely on in daily life. Year 9 pupils have already started studying all of the core topics in the GCSE syllabus, from the highly practical electricity, energy and forces topics, to the more exotic nuclear physics and lifecycle of stars.

Practical work is at the heart of physics, and pupils will continue to use the practical skills developed in KS3 to support and consolidate their theoretical understanding of physics, develop investigative skills, and master the use of specialist practical equipment and techniques.

Maths is the language of physics and 30% of GCSE marks available in the physics paper rely on these skills; Year 9 pupils have recently strengthened their mathematical skills for physics and we will continue to build on this foundation throughout the course.

What will be studied?

The course content is divided into eight topics:

- Energy.
- Electricity.
- Particle model of matter.
- Atomic structure.
- Forces.
- Waves.
- Magnetism and electromagnetism.
- Space physics (physics course only, not included on combined science course).

These topics are studied by both the physics and combined science course, with the physics GCSE course studying each topic in more depth.

How is it assessed?

There are two papers covering different topics:

Paper 1: assesses: Energy, electricity, particle model of matter, atomic structure.

Paper 2: assesses: Waves, magnetism and electromagnetism, space physics.

Both papers are 1 hour 45 minutes long, each make up 50% of the GCSE and contain a mixture of multiple choice, structured, closed short answer and open response.

There is no coursework, instead, pupils are required to complete eight required practicals during the course.

Combined Science

Pathway A or B only

Course Title: GCSE Combined Science Trilogy

Exam Board: AQA

Course Specification: [Click here.](#)

What is the course like?

Science is a way of investigating, understanding, and explaining our natural, physical world and the wider universe. It involves generating and testing ideas, gathering evidence – including by making observations, carrying out investigations and modelling, and communicating and debating with others – in order to develop scientific knowledge, understanding, and explanations.

The Trilogy course builds upon the exciting work studied in biology, chemistry and physics during Years 7-9, and equips pupils with the key skills that they need to progress to level 3 courses and beyond. Practical work is at the heart of science – there are 21 required practical activities which need to be completed through the Trilogy course.

What will be studied?

The Combined Science: Trilogy course covers the same topics as covered in the separate science qualifications, but there are sections of each topic which are not covered in the Trilogy to such great depth. Please see the individual pages for biology, chemistry and physics for the topic lists.

How is it assessed?

The qualification is a double GCSE which will be graded on a 17-point scale: 1 to 9, where 9 is the best grade.

Pupils will sit six examinations at the end of Year 11 – two for each science. Each exam is 1 hour 15 minutes in length and is made up of multiple choice, structured, closed short answer, and open response questions. Each exam paper is available in higher tier and foundation tier and is made up of 70 marks.

20% of the marks in each paper are based on mathematical skills (1:2:3 ratio for biology, chemistry and physics). So for each single mark attributed to mathematical skills in biology, there must be two marks in chemistry and three marks in physics.

English Language

Course Title: GCSE English Language

Exam Board: AQA

Course Specification: [Click here.](#)

What is the course like?

The specification is designed to inspire and motivate pupils, providing appropriate stretch and challenge whilst ensuring that the assessment and texts are, as far as possible, accessible to all pupils. It enables pupils to develop the skills they need to read, understand and analyse a wide range of different texts and communicate in written and spoken language. There are two papers, each assessing reading and writing in an integrated way. Pupils also complete a non-examined assessment in spoken language. The course provides a strong foundation upon which to build for further academic and vocational study and for employment, helping pupils progress to a full range of courses in further and higher education.

What will be studied?

Pupils will draw upon a range of texts as reading stimulus and engage with creative as well as real and relevant contexts. Pupils will have opportunities to develop higher-order reading and critical thinking skills that encourage genuine enquiry into different topics and themes. This specification will ensure that pupils can read fluently and write effectively. Pupils will be able to demonstrate a confident control of Standard English and write grammatically correct sentences, deploying figurative language and analysing texts. For GCSE English language you will learn to:

- Read a wide range of texts fluently and with good understanding.
- Read critically and use knowledge gained from wide reading to inform and improve their own writing.
- Write effectively and coherently using Standard English appropriately.
- Use grammar correctly, punctuate and spell accurately.
- Acquire and apply a wide vocabulary alongside knowledge and understanding of grammatical terminology, and linguistic conventions for reading, writing and spoken language.
- Listen to and understand spoken language, and use spoken Standard English effectively. Spoken language will be reported as a separate grade on the pupil's certificate.

How is it assessed?

There are two written examinations at the end of Year 11. All texts used in the examination will be unseen. Examination results will be graded overall from 1-9.

Paper 1: Fiction & Imaginative Writing 64 marks; 40% of GCSE; written exam: 1 hour 45 minutes.

Section A: Reading Questions on an unseen 19th-century fiction extract. (24 marks).

2 short form comprehension questions (1 x 1 mark, 1 x 2 marks).

1 question on structure and language (6 marks).

1 extended question on evaluation (15 marks).

Section B: Writing.

Writing tasks are linked by a theme to the reading extract. Different aspects of the theme will be reflected in each task. One of the writing tasks will provide two images that students can use to help them generate ideas for their writing. Pupils can write a response that draws on just one or neither of the images. 1 extended imaginative writing task (24 marks for content, 16 marks for technical accuracy: 40 marks)

Paper 2: Non-fiction and Transactional Writing 96 marks; 60% of GCSE; written exam: 2 hours 05 minutes.

Section A: Reading - questions on two thematically linked, unseen non-fiction extracts.

2 linked texts: one non-fiction text and one literary non-fiction text (56 marks).

4 short form comprehension questions (2 x 2 marks; 2 x 1 mark).

1 longer form question on language and structure (15 marks).

1 longer form question on evaluation (15 marks).

1 longer form question on summary and synthesis, (6 marks).

1 comparative question (14 marks).

Section B: Writing Transactional writing

Explore and develop transactional writing skills, for example letters, articles, reports; there are a choice of two writing tasks. The tasks are linked by a theme to the reading extracts (24 marks for content, 16 marks for technical accuracy 40 marks).

Non-examined Assessment:

- Spoken language component.
- Presenting.
- Responding to questions and feedback.
- Use of Standard English.

The speech is presented to an audience (or as though to an audience) and is marked by class teacher; this is a separate endorsement (0% weighting of GCSE; graded as Pass, Merit, Distinction or Not Classified).

English Literature

Course Title: GCSE English Literature

Exam Board: AQA

Course Specification: [Click here.](#)

What is the course like?

The specification is designed to be demanding, rigorous, inclusive and empowering. Pupils will read a wide range of classic literature fluently and with good understanding, and make connections across their reading; they will learn to evaluate texts critically, so that they are able to discuss and explain their understanding and ideas; they will appreciate the depth and power of the English literary heritage and learn to write accurately, effectively and analytically about their reading, using Standard English. They will acquire and use a wide vocabulary, including grammatical terminology, and other literary and linguistic terms they will use to criticise and analyse what they read. Pupils are tested in an untiered, closed book exam. There are extract-based questions in the assessment of the 19th-century novel and of the Shakespeare plays.

What will be studied?

- Shakespeare and Post-1914 Literature (Paper 1).
- We study *Romeo and Juliet* by William Shakespeare and *An Inspector Calls* by JB Priestley.
- 19th-century Novel and Poetry since 1789 (Paper 2).
- We study *A Christmas Carol* by Charles Dickens and Edexcel's collection of poetry entitled *Belonging*.

How is it assessed?

There are two examinations at the end of Year 11. Examination results will be graded overall from 1 – 9.

Paper 1: written exam: 1 hour 45 minutes. 80 marks. Closed book examination. 50% of GCSE.

Section A: Shakespeare

Pupils will answer two questions on the play they have studied. The first question will be focused upon the language and structure used by the writer in a extract printed from *Romeo and Juliet* (20 marks); the second question focuses on the play as a whole and its themes and context (20 marks)

Section B: Post-1914 Literature

Pupils will answer one question from a choice of two on *An Inspector Calls*. They will be required to write about the key themes, ideas and context of the whole play. (40 marks - 8 of which are awarded for use of spelling, punctuation, vocabulary and grammar).

Paper 2: written exam: written exam: 2 hour 15 minutes. 80 marks.

50% of GCSE.

Section A:

Pupils will answer two questions on their chosen 19th century novel – the first question is focused upon the language and structure used by the writer in a extract printed from *A Christmas Carol* and a second focuses on the whole text and its themes and ideas. (40 marks).

Section B: Poetry.

Pupils will answer one comparative question on one named poem, printed in the paper, and one other poem from their anthology cluster, *Belonging* (20 marks).

Section C: Unseen Poetry.

Pupils will answer one question comparing two unseen poems (20 marks).

French

Pathway B or C only

Course Title: GCSE French

Exam Board: AQA

Course Specification: [Click here.](#)

What is the course like?

The GCSE French course builds on the skill set developed by our language- learners at Key Stage 3. Pupils hone their skills in listening, speaking, reading and writing, alongside grammar and translation. They develop their spoken and written French in a wide range of topics, using tools such as Sentence Builders to support production of extended sentences. Over the GCSE course, pupils are exposed to a range of authentic texts and materials, enabling them to access meaning in real-life contexts. Pupils study a variety of French-speaking cultures, learning about the diversity of francophone traditions.

What will be studied?

- Theme 1: People and Lifestyle.
- Theme 2: Popular Culture.
- Theme 3: Communication and the world around us.

How is it assessed?

Paper 1: Listening (25% of GCSE) - Understanding and responding to spoken extracts comprising the defined vocabulary and grammar for each tier, and dictation of short, spoken extracts.

- Section A: Listening comprehension questions in English, to be answered in English or non-verbally.
- Section B: Dictation where pupils transcribe short sentences.

Paper 2: Speaking (25% of GCSE) - Speaking using clear and comprehensible language, reading aloud and talking about visual stimuli:

- Role-play.
- Reading aloud and short unprepared conversation.
- Discussion of a photo card and longer unprepared conversation.

Paper 3: Reading (25% of GCSE) - Understanding and responding to written texts and translating from French into English.

- Section A: Questions in English, to be answered in English or non-verbally.
- Section B: Translation from French into English.

Paper 4: Writing (25% of GCSE) - Writing in French in a lexically and grammatically accurate way in response to simple and familiar stimuli and translating from English into French.

The question styles are different at foundation and higher tier:

Foundation Tier:

- Question 1: five short sentences in response to a photo.
- Question 2: paragraph of approximately 50 words.
- Question 3: five short grammar tasks.
- Question 4: translation of sentences from English into French.
- Question 5: paragraph of approximately 90 words (choice of 2 questions).

Higher Tier:

- Question 1: translation of sentences from English into French.
- Question 2: paragraph of approximately 90 words (choice of 2 questions).
- Question 3: open-ended writing task of approximately 150 words (choice from two questions).

Mathematics

Course Title: GCSE Mathematics

Exam Board: Pearson Edexcel

Course Specification: [Click here.](#)

What is the course like?

The course is designed to provide a strong foundation for further academic and vocational study and for employment, to give pupils the appropriate mathematical skills, knowledge and understanding to help them progress to a full range of courses in further and higher education. This includes A Level mathematics courses as well as A Level and undergraduate courses in other disciplines such as biology, physics, chemistry, geography and psychology, where the understanding and application of mathematics is crucial. The aims and objectives of the course is to enable pupils to:

- Develop fluent knowledge, skills, and understanding of mathematical methods and concepts.
- Acquire, select, and apply mathematical techniques to solve problems.
- Reason mathematically, make deductions and inferences, and draw conclusions.
- Comprehend, interpret, and communicate mathematical information in a variety of forms appropriate to the information and context.

What will be studied?

- Number.
- Algebra.
- Ratio, proportion and rates of change.
- Geometry and measures.
- Probability.
- Statistics.

How is it assessed?

The qualification consists of three equally-weighted written examination papers at either foundation tier or higher tier.

- Paper 1: non-calculator assessment.
- Paper 2: calculator is allowed.
- Paper 3: calculator is allowed.

Each paper is 1 hour and 30 minutes long, and has 80 marks.

The content outlined for each tier will be assessed across all three papers. Each paper has a range of question types; some questions will be set in both mathematical and non-mathematical contexts.

Pupils are able to take assessments in either the foundation tier (grades 1 to 5) or higher tier (grades 4 to 9, grade 3 allowed).



Optional Subject Choices

University of Birmingham School offers a broad academic curriculum, based around the core subjects of the national curriculum and the subjects regarded as being useful to support application and entry into employment, vocational training and higher education (including into leading universities). Each subject is led by a well-qualified subject leader, supported by a team of inspiring teachers.



Art

Course Title: GCSE Art & Design: Fine Art

Exam Board: OCR

Course Specification: [Click here.](#)

***Pupils can either pick Art or Photography - it isn't possible to do both.
Please talk to your art teacher if you are not sure which one to select.**

What is the course like?

Art at GCSE is a hugely practical, creative and varied course. The department is lucky enough to have a vast range of equipment enabling Fine Art students to learn and develop skills in drawing, photography (with DSLR cameras), clay work, watercolour experiments and painting, acrylic painting, photoshop, GIFS, drawing, textiles techniques, collage, wire work, etching and lino-printing to name a few.

The World Economic Forum suggests that the most sought after skills for careers in 2020 include creativity, problem solving, critical thinking, emotional intelligence, judgement/decision making and cognitive flexibility - all in their top 10. A course such as Art allows students to gain experience in all of these areas, providing plentiful examples for UCAS applications and CVs, irrespective of whether they will continue into a career in the creative industries.

Art creates self-starters and helps develop emotional intelligence. It requires the student to begin setting their own agenda from within themselves, rather than following a set path. The arts develop the broader dimensions and character of the human being alongside the development of practical and technical skills.

Examples of career pathways can be seen by our A-Level Art alumni. Some of them are continuing their study in areas such as architecture, engineering, digital design, fine art, textiles and interior design. For more examples of creative industry pathways visit: <http://creativejourneyuk.org>

What will be studied?

Pupils will start the course by trying a bit of everything, allowing them to create a wide ranging collection of work alongside building up their skills, knowledge and confidence. From Easter of Year 10 pupils specialise in their favourite and most successful areas, choosing themes and artists to help them build up a more independent project. To start with, keeping an open mind to all of the techniques is a must!

How is it assessed?

There are two assessed projects:

- The Portfolio (accounts for 60% of the GCSE grade). Learners complete a body of practical work showing their personal response to a starting point. They study artists, take photographs, and experiment with ideas before creating a final piece.
- The 'Externally Set Task' (accounts for 40% of the GCSE grade). This is Art's equivalent to an exam. Pupils will be issued a booklet on 2 January from the exam board (OCR), which will provide learners with a number of themes, each with a range of written and visual starting points. Pupils will be asked to create a project based on one of the options they provide in the booklet in a similar way to the first project, but this time with even more independence. The preparatory project work and the final piece (completed over 10 hours at school) are all marked together.

Photography

Course Title: GCSE Art & Design: Photography

Exam Board: OCR

Course Specification: [Click here.](#)

*** Pupils can either pick Art or Photography - it isn't possible to do both.
Please talk to your art teacher if you are not sure which one to select.**

What is the course like?

Photography at GCSE is a hugely practical, creative and varied course. The UoBS Art Department is lucky enough to have the most amazing range of equipment so that students can learn to use digital media using DSLR cameras, photoshop, GIFs and video equipment alongside lighting equipment.

Photography is about looking, learning, thinking and communicating ideas. It inspires creative thinkers. Photography means 'drawing with light' and that is what photographers do when they take a picture. Many photographers have explored various techniques to create images that make a personal statement about things that have interested or concerned them. The most exciting aspect of photography is that you are capturing the world as you see it.

All photography projects will be written up and presented on a computer alongside all of the creative 'post production' work (such as Photoshop, Premiere Pro and any other photo editing). It is therefore important to like working with computers, as most of your time will be spent in this way.

What will be studied?

Pupils will start the course by experimenting with different types of photographic equipment alongside creative applications on computers and tablets, with the aim of building up their skills, knowledge and confidence. They will start to specialise in their favourite and most successful areas as the course goes on. To start with, keeping an open mind to all of the techniques and processes is a must!

As the course develops, pupils will create two main projects for their GCSE. They will be given a theme that they will need to research and think of ideas for, they will need to find artists to inspire their ideas, take a wide range of photographs to help them with their theme's development and eventually create a personal 'final piece' in a digital media format. There are a variety of specialist areas to choose from: Documentary photography, Photo-journalism, Studio photography, Location photography, Experimental photography, Installation, Moving image: film, video and animation. Work is not limited to one area of study.

How is it assessed?

There are two assessed projects:

- The Portfolio (accounts for 60% of the GCSE grade). Learners complete a body of practical work showing their personal response to a starting point. They study artists, take photographs and experiment with ideas before creating a final piece using digital media.
- The 'Externally Set Task' (accounts for 40% of the GCSE grade). This is the equivalent to an exam. Students will be issued a booklet on 2 January from the exam board (OCR), which will provide learners with a number of themes, each with a range of written and visual starting points. Students will be asked to create a project based on one of the options they provide in the booklet in a similar way to the first project, but this time with even more independence. The preparatory project work and the final piece (completed over 10 hours at school) are all marked together.

Business Studies

Course Title: GCSE Business.

Exam Board: AQA.

Course Specification: [Click here.](#)

What is the course like?

GCSE Business provides an exciting opportunity for students who are interested in the world around them and may want a career in business. Students will learn how entrepreneurs turn simple ideas into profitable businesses, and how businesses operate and make important decisions on a local, national and global scale. The course explores what it takes to be successful in business, and it encourages students to be enterprising, and to think creatively and commercially in order to solve problems.

We believe that our programme of study will develop confident and enthusiastic Business students who can reflect on real life situations and make recommendations that would enhance the performance of any business. Students will develop key skills such as the ability to recall, select and apply knowledge and understanding of business; as well as to analyse and evaluate evidence providing reasoned judgements and conclusions. Success in this course would enable students to progress to all types of further education including A levels, and can lead into a wide range of careers including marketing, IT, computing, retail, finance, economics, law, management, insurance, administration, and banking.

What will be studied?

The GCSE Business course is divided into six main parts as set out below:

1. Business in the real world.
2. Influences on business.
3. Business operations.
4. Human Resources.
5. Marketing.
6. Finance.

How is it assessed?

The GCSE Business course is assessed through two written examinations:

- **Paper 1:** Influences of operations and HRM on business activity. This examination is worth a maximum of 90 marks and comprises 50% of your GCSE result. It is 1 hour 45 minutes long.
- **Paper 2:** Influences of marketing and finance on business activity. This examination is worth a maximum of 90 marks and comprises 50% of your GCSE result. It is 1 hour 45 minutes long.

Both examinations have three sections:

- **Section A:** multiple-choice questions and short-answer questions worth 20 marks.
- **Section B:** a short case study with questions worth approximately 34 marks.
- **Section C:** a short case study with questions worth approximately 36 marks.

Computer Science

Course Title: GCSE Computer Science

Exam Board: OCR

Course Specification: [Click here.](#)

*** Pupils can either pick GCSE Computer Science or Vocational IT, and are then required to work with the Computer Science department to decide which of the two subjects they are best suited to.**

What is the course like?

So far pupils will have had the opportunity to learn a number of different aspects of computer science. Two of the most important skills which pupils have been developing is the ability to solve problems and to code solutions to those problems. This is the heart and soul of this GCSE. We will be continuing work on Python and expanding it out into new and interesting directions. This will include creating games using Pygame, working on micro:bits (in Python) and many other interesting projects. As pupils' confidence in programming increases so will the possibilities of what we can create.

Lessons will be split into two parts: theory and lab sessions. During theory sessions pupils will learn more about how computers work and during lab sessions, pupils will work on computational thinking and programming.

Pupils who enjoy learning about how computers work, programming in Python or solving problems will get a lot from this course. Programming skills are in high demand and many STEM (science, technology, engineering and mathematics) careers are increasingly needing people who can write code.

What will be studied?

The course covers three main areas:

1. Computer Systems:

- System architectures.
- Computer memory.
- Storage devices.
- Wired and wireless networking.
- Network topologies, protocols and layers.
- System security and encryption.
- System software including operating systems Ethical,

legal, cultural and environmental impacts of computing.

2. Computational thinking, algorithms and programming:

- Algorithms.
- Programming techniques.
- Producing robust programs.
- Translators and facilities of programming languages.
- Data representation including binary.

How is it assessed?

There are two papers covering different topics, and a non-exam element:

- [Paper 1](#): Computer Systems (50%).
- [Paper 2](#): Computational thinking, algorithms and programming (50%).

Both exam papers are 1 hour and 30 minutes long and are out of 80 marks.

Vocational IT

Vocational Qualification

Course Title: Cambridge Nationals IT

Exam Board: OCR

Course Specification: [Click here.](#)

*** Pupils can either pick GCSE Computer Science or Vocational IT, and are then required to work with the Computer Science department to decide which of the two subjects they are best suited to.**

What is the course like?

In Key Stage 3 you will have spent a long time learning how computers work and how you can create programs for them. However, you will have also had lots of opportunities to interact with technology to help get your work done. You have created PowerPoints to act like websites, you have interacted on teams, sent emails, worked on different websites, created word documents and lots more. Using technology is something that will be part of every aspect of your lives when you are older and developing skills to be able to use technology confidently is important.

In vocational IT you will become confident users of technology. You will experience a range of applications and understand how they are used in the wider economy. You will be examined through a combination of NEA (non-examined assessment) and a written assessment. The exam is worth 40% and will be taught interactively using one of the computer labs. You will learn how to use modern applications confidently as you learn the theory for the exam.

The other two units are both NEA and will be taught through smaller projects to give pupils the confidence to pass the real NEA. Each stage of the NEA will be taught, practiced, and assessed before the real NEA is completed. You can read below about what you will be doing for both.

What will be studied?

Unit 1. Exam:

- Design tools.
- Human computer interface (HCI) in everyday life.
- Data and testing.
- Cyber-security and legislation.
- Digital communications.
- Internet of Everything (IoE).

Unit 2. Spreadsheet NEA:

- Planning and designing a spreadsheet solution.
- Creating the spreadsheet solution.
- Testing the spreadsheet solution.

Unit 3. Using Augmented Reality (AR):

- Augmented Reality.
- Designing an augmented reality model prototype.
- Creating an Augmented reality model prototype.
- Testing and reviewing.

How is it assessed?

There is one exam and two NEA:

- IT in the digital world (EXAM) – 40%
- Spreadsheet (NEA) – 30% *
- Augmented reality (NEA) – 30% *

The NEA will be done in class under controlled conditions.

The exam is 1 hour and 15 minutes.

Design and Technology

Course Title: GCSE Design & Technology

Exam Board: AQA

Course Specification: [Click here.](#)

What is the course like?

GCSE Design and Technology will prepare pupils to participate confidently and successfully in an increasingly technological world. Pupils will gain awareness and learn from wider influences on Design and Technology including historical, social, cultural, environmental and economic factors. Pupils will get the opportunity to work creatively when designing and making and apply technical and practical expertise. The GCSE allows pupils to study core technical and designing and making principles, including a broad range of design processes, materials techniques and equipment. They will also have the opportunity to study specialist technical principles in greater depth. Pupils will also develop their knowledge of famous designers and companies.

Links to maths: Pupils learn to apply the following mathematical skills:

1. Arithmetic and numerical computation.
2. Handling data.
- 3 Graphs.
4. Geometry and trigonometry.

Links to science: Pupils learn to and apply the following scientific knowledge and skills:

1. Use scientific vocabulary, terminology and definitions.
2. Life cycle assessment and recycling.
3. Using materials.

What will be studied?

- Core technical principles: new and emerging technologies, energy generation and storage, developments in new materials, systems approach to designing, mechanical devices, materials and their working properties.
- Specialist technical principles: selection of materials or components, forces and stresses, ecological and social footprint, sources and origins, using and working with materials, stock forms, types and sizes, scales of production, specialist techniques and processes, surface treatments and finishes.
- Designing and making principles: Pupils should know and understand that all design and technology activities take place within a wide range of contexts. They should also understand how the prototypes they develop must satisfy wants or needs and be fit for their intended use, for example: the home, school, work or leisure.

How is it assessed?

There is a written exam and a non examination assessment for this subject:

- **Paper 1:** Core technical principles; specialist technical principles; designing and making principles. The exam paper is 2 hours long, out of 100 marks and makes up 50% of the GCSE. The examination will include a mixture of multiple choice, short answer and extended response questions assessing a breadth and depth of technical knowledge and understanding.
- **Non-exam assessment (NEA):** Design and make project, this includes a portfolio of work and a final prototype. Pupils have approximately 30-35 hours for the project. The non-exam assessment is out of 100 marks, and makes up 50% of the GCSE. Pupils will produce a prototype and portfolio of evidence. Work will be marked by teachers and moderated by AQA.

Geography

Course Title: GCSE Geography: Investigating Geographical Issues

Exam Board: Edexcel (B)

Course Specification: [Click here.](#)

What is the course like?

Geography helps us to make sense of the world around us. It is hands on, it is relevant, and it is fun. We will study a range of topics such as urban issues, world development, extreme environments, rivers and hazards, to name but a few. The course will give pupils the chance to get to grips with some of the big questions which affect our world and understand the social, economic and physical forces and processes which shape and change our world. Fieldwork, or working outside the classroom is a really important part of geography. This will be a brilliant opportunity for pupils to experience some of the things they have learnt about in class, see things differently and, of course, have fun. The course provides an engaging real-world focus which supports pupils' progression to A Level.

What will be studied?

Content:

- Hazardous Earth.
- Development dynamics.
- Challenges of an urbanising world.
- The UK's evolving physical and human landscapes (Coastal change and conflict, river processes and pressures, dynamic urban areas).
- People and the biosphere.
- Forests under threat.
- Consuming energy resources.

Skills:

- Making a geographical decision.
- Geographical fieldwork investigations.

How is it assessed?

There are three exam papers, covering different topics:

- [Paper 1](#): Global Geographical Issues - Hazardous Earth; development dynamics; challenges of an urbanising world. 37.5% of the qualification, 94 marks.
- [Paper 2](#): UK Geographical Issues - The UK's evolving physical landscape; the UK's evolving human landscape; geographical investigations. 37.5% of the qualification, 94 marks.
- [Paper 3](#): People and Environment Issues - Making geographical decisions; people and the biosphere; forests under threat; consuming energy resources; making a geographical decision. 25% of the qualification, 64 marks.

Each paper is a written exam, taking 1 hour and 30 minutes. The exam includes multiple-choice questions, short open, open response, extended writing questions and calculations.

German

Course Title: GCSE German

Exam Board: AQA

Course Specification: [Click here.](#)

*** German is a guided choice, where agreement must be obtained from the MFL department that the pupil has an aptitude for languages.**

What is the course like?

This is an exciting opportunity to take a second GCSE in a Modern Foreign Language, in addition to studying French at GCSE. The GCSE German course builds on the skill-set developed by our language-learners at Key Stage 3. Pupils hone their skills in listening, speaking, reading and writing, alongside grammar and translation. They develop their spoken and written German in a wide range of topics, using tools such as Sentence Builders to support production of extended sentences. Over the GCSE course, pupils are exposed to a range of authentic texts and materials, enabling them to access meaning in real-life contexts. Pupils study a variety of German-speaking cultures, learning about the diversity their traditions.

What will be studied?

Pupils study all of the following themes:

- Theme 1: People and Lifestyle.
- Theme 2: Popular Culture.
- Theme 3: Communication and the world around us.

How is it assessed?

Paper 1: Listening (25% of GCSE) - Understanding and responding to spoken extracts comprising the defined vocabulary and grammar for each tier, and dictation of short, spoken extracts.

- Section A: Listening comprehension questions in English, to be answered in English or non-verbally.
- Section B: Dictation where students transcribe short sentences.

Paper 2: Speaking (25% of GCSE) - Speaking using clear and comprehensible language, reading aloud and talking about visual stimuli.

- Role-play.
- Reading aloud and short unprepared conversation.
- Discussion of a photo card and longer unprepared conversation.

Paper 3: Reading (25% of GCSE) - Understanding and responding to written texts and translating from German into English.

- Section A: Questions in English, to be answered in English or non-verbally.
- Section B: Translation from German into English.

Paper 4: Writing (25% of GCSE) - Writing in German in a lexically and grammatically accurate way in response to simple and familiar stimuli and translating from English into German.

The question styles are different at foundation and higher tier:

Foundation Tier:

- Question 1: five short sentences in response to a photo.
- Question 2: paragraph of approximately 50 words.
- Question 3: five short grammar tasks.
- Question 4: translation of sentences from English into German.
- Question 5: paragraph of approximately 90 words (choice of 2 questions).

Higher Tier:

- Question 1: translation of sentences from English into German.
- Question 2: paragraph of approximately 90 words (choice of 2 questions).
- Question 3: open-ended writing task of approximately 150 words (choice from two questions).

History

Course Title: GCSE History B (Schools History Project)

Exam Board: OCR

Course Specification: [Click here.](#)

What is the course like?

Disease, espionage, slavery, polar bears and Hitler. These are six words which could sum up our course here at UoB School. Yet that would hide the true purpose of our GCSE History course, which is to help pupils understand how the actions of people can change the world, sometimes for the better and a lot for the worse. Our course helps pupils to understand periods of change in the past so that they can be prepared to adapt to change in the future. Yet apart from these important lessons, pupils also improve their ability to research, analyse and communicate which they will be using no matter what they do in life, long after they have forgotten the percentage of people who died from the Black Death. Lessons will be structured around pupils investigating real historical questions using the actual evidence left to us and they will then construct an answer to these questions.

What will be studied?

Unit 1: The People's Health (c.1250-today).

- How far did people's health change during the Medieval and Early Modern Periods?
- How far has people's health changed since 1750?

Unit 2: The Elizabethans (1580-1603).

- How secure was Elizabeth the First's power during her reign?
- Was Elizabethan England really a 'Merrie' time?

Unit 3: History Around Us.

- What can we understand from the remaining evidence about Dudley Castle's long history.
- Including looking at its uses as a medieval castle, a Tudor manor house, a Civil War fort, an industrial site and a zoo.

Unit 4: The making of modern America (1789-1900).

- Why did America expand its territory following its declaration of independence until the Civil War?
- How far was late nineteenth-century America really the home of the 'American Dream'?

Unit 5: Living under Nazi rule (1933-1945).

- Why was Hitler able to establish himself as dictator of Germany?
- How far did Nazi rule change people's lives?

How is it assessed?

There are three exam papers, covering different topics:

- **Paper 1:** 'The People's Health (c.1250-today)' and 'The Elizabethans (1580-1603)', 1 hour 45 mins exam.
- **Paper 2:** 'History Around Us', 1 hour exam.
- **Paper 3:** 'The making of modern America (1789-1900)' and 'Living under Nazi rule (1933-1945)', 1 hour 45 mins exam.

Hospitality & Catering

Vocational Qualification

Course Title: Level 1/2 Technical Award in Hospitality and Catering.

Exam Board: Welsh Joint Education Committee (WJEC).

Course Specification: [Click here.](#)

What is the course like?

The WJEC Level 1/2 Award in Hospitality and Catering has been designed to support learners in schools who want to learn about this vocational sector and the potential it can offer them for their careers or further study. It provides learners with a core depth of knowledge about the hospitality and catering industry while enabling learners to develop different cooking techniques, methods and skills.

What will be studied?

The course is broken down into two units:

Unit 01: The Hospitality and Catering Industry.

This unit aims to introduce learners to the hospitality and catering industry, which is a major employer of people in the UK. In this unit, learners will gain knowledge about the different types of hospitality and catering businesses, how they operate and the staff that are employed within these businesses. Pupils will also learn about factors that affect the success of a business within the hospitality and catering industry including how modern businesses use social media, sustainability and emerging and innovative cooking techniques to influence consumers. This unit also covers issues such as food-related causes of ill health, health and safety and food allergies.

Unit 02: Hospitality and Catering in Action.

In this unit learners will gain knowledge of the nutritional needs of a range of people including babies, teenagers and adults. Learners will be required to plan and make a range of nutritious dishes that are suitable for a wide target audience and will learn how to present these dishes to restaurant standard. Throughout the course learners will further develop safe and hygienic food preparation and cooking skills.

How is it assessed?

As a vocational Level 2 qualification, students will be graded Pass, Merit, Distinction or Distinction* which are broadly equivalent to GCSE grades 4, 5/6, 7 and 8 respectively.

Unit 2 is internally assessed with unit 1 being assessed by an external examination. The overall weighting of assessment is 60% internal (Unit 2) to 40% external (Unit 1).

For the internal assessment, each learner must complete a portfolio around a given brief. All of the Assessment Criteria must be met in order to gain a grade. A practical must also be completed as part of this assessment. Learners will use the knowledge gained over the duration of the course to carry out preparation, cooking and presentation of the dishes.

External assessments are set and marked by WJEC. The assessment assesses learners' knowledge and understanding based on the content of Unit 1 of the qualification. The external assessment is administered under specified assessment conditions and will last for 90 minutes.

Music

Course Title: GCSE Music

Exam Board: Eduqas

Course Specification: [Click here.](#)

What is the course like?

Performing, composing and listening are the building blocks of the GCSE Music course; all skills that pupils have been developing from Years 7-9. Pupils will study a huge range of different styles of music from around the world and throughout the last 500 years, broadening their understanding of musical traditions. They will perform solo and in groups, building their instrumental or vocal skills. They will also develop their composing skills with our Music Technology software, leading to pupils writing two complete original pieces of music. 60% of the overall grade is built around coursework, where pupils will receive regular guidance and support, with only one written exam paper at the end of their studies. Music GCSE is a creative option, where pupils develop a wide variety of transferrable skills that appeal to colleges, Universities and employers alike.

What will be studied?

There are three main skills that pupils will be studying:

1. Performance: developing performing skills through practice, performances and workshops both as a solo performer and in groups.

2. Composition: learning and developing techniques for composing music in a range of musical styles. Pupils will learn how to create and develop melodic ideas, how to structure a piece of music and how to use harmony and instrumentation in composition.

3. Listening: covering a wide range of styles including Classical Music, Blues, Musical Theatre, Film Music and Popular Music. Pupils will develop listening skills to identify and analyse features within the music, including two 'set works' that are studied in greater detail.

How is it assessed?

The course is assessed through both coursework and a written exam:

Component 1: Performing (30% of the grade).

Pupils will perform as both a soloist and within an ensemble group, and will be preparing their pieces throughout the course. It is beneficial, but not essential, for pupils to already play an instrument to a Grade 2 or 3 standard, or already be taking instrumental or vocal lessons.

Component 2: Composing (30% of the grade).

Pupils will compose two pieces of music, one to a set brief (eg 'compose a piece of music for a sci-fi film') and one free composition (pupils choose exactly what they do). We will build on these skills and techniques throughout the course.

Component 3: Listening and Appraising (40% of the grade).

Pupils will take a 1 hour 15 minutes listening and appraising exam. This is a written exam in which pupils will answer questions on the set works they have studied, as well as listening to and identifying the features of unfamiliar pieces of music from a range of styles.

Physical Education

Course Title: GCSE Physical Education

Exam Board: OCR

Course Specification: [Click here.](#)

*** Pupils can either pick GCSE PE or Sports Studies, and are then required to work with the PE department to decide which of the two subjects they are best suited to.**

What is the course like?

Physical Education at GCSE is an opportunity to immerse passionate young people in the world of sport. This course follows an academic journey that allows pupils to critically analyse and evaluate physical performance and apply their experience of practical activities.

Within theory lessons, the course will equip pupils with the knowledge, understanding, skills and values to develop and maintain their performance in physical activities and understand the benefits to health, fitness and well-being, whilst linking this theory to their own sporting lives.

The practical content aims to physically challenge pupils to develop and apply advanced skills in a range of team and individual performances. Pupils will document, analyse and evaluate their improvement in at least three sports over time.

This course is for the committed and enthusiastic sportsperson who has a genuine interest in how to better their performance through studying components of sport science - physiology, biomechanics, and psychology.

What will be studied?

- **Unit 1A:** Applied anatomy and physiology and physical training - theory (30%) - Applied anatomy and physiology (skeletal, muscular, cardiovascular and respiratory systems; movement analysis using biomechanics; short and long term effects of exercise on the body systems); physical training (components of fitness; fitness testing; principles of training; methods of training; preventing injury).
- **Unit 1B:** Sociocultural influences, sports psychology, health, fitness and well-being - theory (30%) - socio-cultural influences (engagement patterns of different social groups in sport; commercialisation of sport; ethical and socio-cultural issues); sports psychology (goal setting; mental preparation; classification of movement and skill); health, fitness and well-being (nutrition; diet; physical, social, emotional well-being).
- **Unit 2:** Practical (30%) - Develop performance in three activities from the approved list: one from the individual list, one from the team list, one from either list.
- **Unit 3:** Analysing and evaluating performance (10%) - A coursework project that requires pupils to apply theoretical knowledge to practical examples of sport, demonstrating understanding through written (essay based), statistical (data analysis, graphs, percentage improvements) and performance evidenced detail.

How is it assessed?

Non-exam assessment components (40% total):

- Analysis and evaluation of practical performance (EAP) coursework project.
- Practical performance in three sports (practical moderation with other schools and an examiner).

Examined assessment components (60% total):

- Paper 1: Applied anatomy and physiology; physical training (30%, 1 hour).
- Paper 2: Sociocultural influences; sports psychology; health, fitness & well-being (30%, 1 hour).

Sports Studies

Vocational Qualification

Course Title: Level 2 Cambridge National: Sports Studies.

Exam Board: OCR.

Course Specification: [Click here.](#)

* Pupils can either pick GCSE PE or Sports Studies, and are then required to work with the PE department to decide which of the two subjects they are best suited to.

What is the course like?

Sports Studies is a course which focuses on developing a diverse skill set including: leadership, communication, problem solving, team work, evaluation and analysis which are learned and applied throughout the qualification, ready to be utilised in many other educational and employment settings.

Pupils will apply this sector-based focus to a range of sporting and physical education themes. Pupils have the opportunity to apply theoretical knowledge about different types of sports and physical activity, skill development and sport leadership to their own practical performances. They will learn about contemporary issues in sport such as funding, participation, ethics and role models, and the media. Pupils will develop an appreciation of the importance of sport locally and nationally, different ways to become involved and how this shapes the sporting industry.

What will be studied?

Across the course, pupils will study 3 different units:

Unit 1: Contemporary Issues in Sport

The issues that affect participation; the role of sport in promoting values; the importance of hosting major events in sport; the role of national governing bodies. Marks: 70 | 1 hour 15 min paper.

Unit 2: Performance and Leadership in Sport

Know the qualities, responsibilities and styles of sports leaders; planning, delivering, and evaluating a sports sessions for younger children with and without special educational needs and disabilities. You will also use skills, techniques and tactics in both an individual and a team based sport; applying training methods to support performance improvements. Marks: 80 | Practical Performance and Leadership, Coursework.

Unit 3: Sport and the Media

Know how sport is covered across the media; the positive effects of the media; the negative effects of the media; the relationship between sport and the media; evaluating media coverage of sport. Marks: 40 | Coursework.

As a vocational Level 2 qualification, pupils will be graded Pass, Merit, Distinction or Distinction* which are broadly equivalent to GCSE grades 4, 5/6, 7 and 8 respectively.

Religious Studies

Course Title: GCSE Religious Studies

Exam Board: WJEC Eduqas

Course Specification: [Click here.](#)

What is the course like?

The aim this course is to develop our understanding of religious and non-religious beliefs, such as atheism and humanism. We will use key religious texts and other sources of wisdom and authority to explore belief, teaching and practice, as well as trying to develop our own values beliefs and attitudes. Over the two years we will engage with question of belief, values, meaning, purpose, truth, and their influence on human life. This course will deepen pupils' understanding of the relationship between people as they become aware of common and divergent views in different traditions. We will give pupils the opportunity to understand more about the world, the religious challenges it faces, and their own place within that world.

What will be studied?

This course is divided into three sections:

- 50% of the course focuses on moral and religious responses to relationships, life and death, good and evil and human rights. This will be applying and exploring Christian and Islamic responses to these issues, as well as non-religious beliefs such as atheism and humanism. This is called Religious, Philosophical and Ethical Studies in the Modern World.
- 25% of the course is a study of the beliefs, teachings and practices of Christianity. This includes the nature of God, creation, Jesus, the afterlife, worship, pilgrimage and celebrations, Christianity in Britain and around the world.
- 25% of the course focuses on the beliefs, teachings and practices of Islam. This includes the nature of Allah, prophethood, angels, the afterlife, the foundations of faith in Sunni and Shi'a Islam, jihad, and festivals.

How is it assessed?

There are three exam papers, covering different topics:

- [Paper 1](#): Religious, Philosophical and Ethical Studies in the Modern World. 2 hour exam, worth 50% of marks.
- [Paper 2](#): Study of Christianity. 1 hour exam, worth 25% of marks.
- [Paper 3](#): Study of Islam. 1 hour exam, worth 25% of marks.

All exam papers will assess how well pupils can explain what they have learned, how clearly they can debate a controversial issue, and spelling, punctuation and grammar.

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