



SIXTH

Subject Options
Guide

FORM

2022/2023



Welcome to Victoria College Sixth Form

The Sixth Form at Victoria College will provide you with outstanding opportunities to develop your talents to the full. This is an exciting time, and this is where you start to build a successful future.

The academic excellence, camaraderie and our traditions give students a strong sense of belonging that lasts long after they have moved out into the world as Old Victorians.

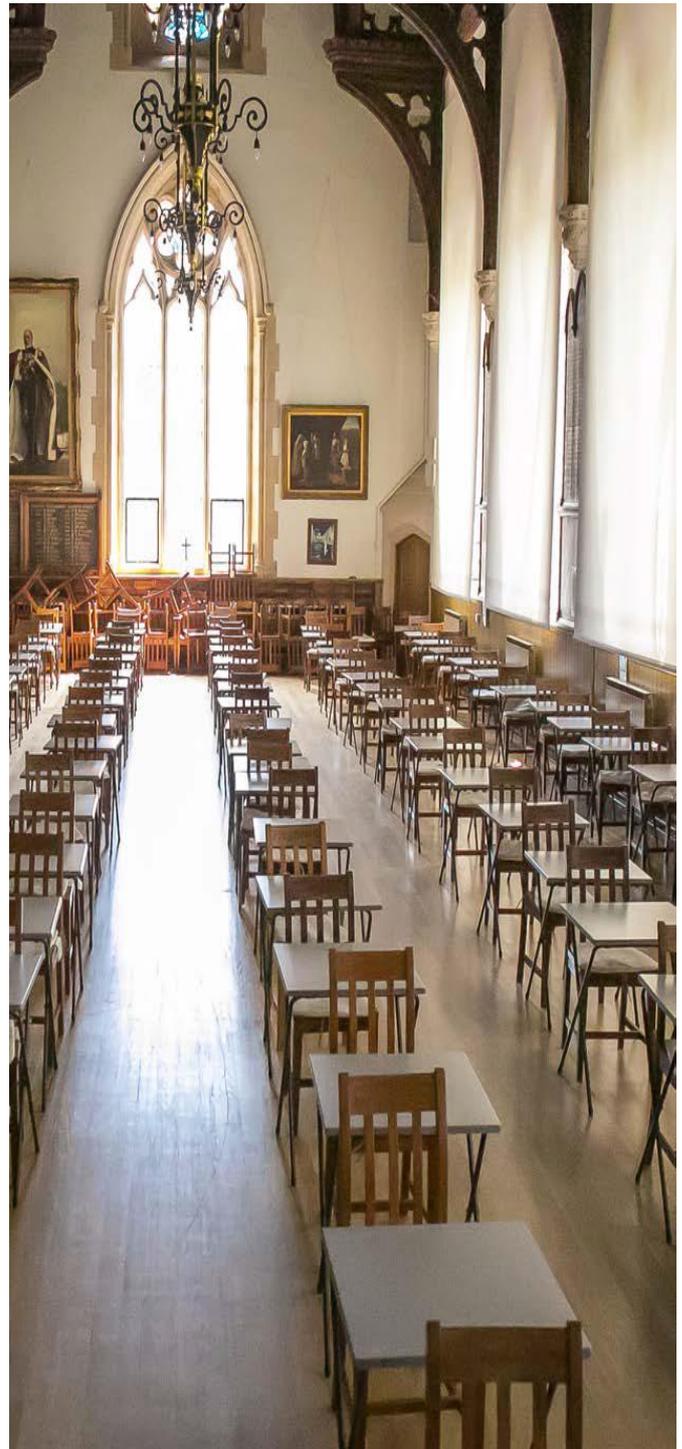
This booklet aims to give you an overview of the current subjects available for you to study at Victoria College at A-level.



Victoria College Sixth Form offers something unique

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Art

Examination board: OCR

The course

This is an exciting course that enables each individual student to explore and develop artistic skills in a number of areas. They will work on several different themes with a wide range of materials and techniques including drawing, painting, mixed media and some photography - on a variety of scales. As the course progresses, students will be given more freedom to explore their own ideas and make pieces that are more personal to them.

There are two major projects - Coursework and Controlled Assignment (exam). The coursework project also contains a written element where students will research an artist(s) of their choice, relating to their own work or artistic style, and produce a personal investigation of between 1000 - 3000 words.

Our A level students have access to individual workspaces in the Art and Design Centre we share with JCG.

Requirements

Art GCSE at Grade 6 or above and an interest and enthusiasm for the subject.

Where can it take you?

Our students have pursued a wide range of art-based courses which have eventually shaped their careers. The course will provide students with the creative and technical knowledge needed to enter areas such as:

Fine Art (painting, sculpture and printmaking)

Architecture

Illustration

Graphics

Product design

Theatre design

Fashion and textile design

Photography and media production



Most students choose an art foundation course to experience a variety of disciplines before embarking on a degree that focuses on a specific area.

Biology

Examination board: Cambridge International A level Biology

The course

This is a consistently popular A level that builds on your GCSE knowledge of Biology and extends your practical skills.

The following topics are studied:

Cell structure Biological molecules Enzymes Cell membranes and transport The mitotic cell cycle Nucleic acids and protein synthesis Transport in plants Transport in mammals Gas exchange and smoking Infectious disease	Immunity Energy and respiration Photosynthesis Homeostasis Control and coordination Inherited change Selection and evolution Biodiversity, classification and conservation Genetic technology
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Students develop and practise many life-long transferable skills including describing, interpreting, explaining, learning facts, the ability to draw together a range of ideas and make sense of them, as well as problem solving skills.

Assessment is by examination:

Paper 1:	Multiple Choice. Questions from the first 11 topics (AS Level) (1hr) 15.5%
Paper 2:	AS Level Structured Questions (1hr 15mins) 23%
Paper 3:	Advanced Practical Skills. Based on the AS Level syllabus (2hrs) 11.5%
Paper 4:	A Level Structured Questions (2hrs) 38.5%
Paper 5:	Planning, Analysis and Evaluation (1hr 15mins) 11.5%

Requirements

Biology GCSE Grade 6 or above, and preferably a Grade 6 in GCSE Chemistry and Maths.

Where can it take you?

To a degree in every subject related to Biology but it is especially important for medicine, veterinary science, biological sciences, ecology, genetics, marine biology, environmental courses. It is also a gateway to other non-science related courses such as law, accountancy, economics, IT and geography.

Business

Examination board: AQA

The course

Business Studies covers the theory behind the major issues that companies are faced with every day. It is about analysis and problem solving in the real world. You will gain an awareness of how the business environment provides opportunities and imposes constraints on organisations. Specific topics include marketing, human resource management, accounting, business and social ethics.

Highlights

- Cross curricular links with many other subjects like Media, DT, English and Maths
- Huge relevance to the real world
- New and interesting to many
- Gives you a good sound base to be able to start your own business

Requirements

GCSE Grade 6 in English and Maths or science. An interest in a business career will be viewed favourably. Common sense and an ability to write concisely are useful skills to carry into this subject.

Where can it take you?

An A level in Business Studies provides a good grounding for many higher education courses and degrees.

The skills obtained in this course will be welcomed by any employer and provides a sound base to start thinking about your own business. Countless careers are opened up to you including finance, marketing, personnel, accounting, law and entrepreneurship.

Business Studies – CTEC

Level 3

Examination board: OCR

Overview of the course

On successful completion of the course, a Level 3 Cambridge Technical Extended Certificate in Business will be awarded. It is a Level 3 qualification that is equivalent to an A Level (with equivalent UCAS points). It is assessed through a mix of coursework and exams which all add up to a final grade at the end of the course. Year 1 starts with a unit on Marketing and Market Research. This is a very practical, hands-on unit where the students will be required to conduct their own market research and will present this back to the 'client'. This will take place alongside various other assignment-based tasks, all of which are assessed internally and, once moderated, the students will receive their first grade on the course. In addition, the students will be studying The Business Environment in order to sit an exam in May. They will learn about different types of businesses and how they are structured, how different functions work together and how businesses can respond to external factors in order to remain competitive. They will finish Year 12 studying Customers and Communication. In Year 13 the students complete the qualification by studying two further internally assessed units and will sit an exam on Business Resources.

What can this lead to?

You will find out about all aspects of running a business organisation – how businesses are set up and structured, how to manage people and finances, and how to market products. This is excellent preparation for the world of work, and especially for management roles in the future. Also, you will find out what makes some organisations more successful than others, which could be very useful for running your own business or making good decisions within any organisation.

Requirements

You will need at least 5 GCSEs at Grade 4 or above, including English and Maths. You do not need to have previously studied Business at GCSE or BTEC Level 2 to choose this

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Chemistry

Examination board: CIE International (9701)

The course

On the International A-level Chemistry course, you will continue your journey into the atomic world, learning what drives chemical reactions and why they occur in the first place. This is a challenging, but rewarding and enjoyable, subject and we move on from GCSE to apply the knowledge and there is a strong emphasis on practical work, which takes place in our well-equipped laboratories.

The course is assessed with five examinations at the end of Year 13:

Area % of A Level

Multiple choice: 15.5%

Structured questions: 23%

Advanced practical skills: 11.5%

Structured questions: 38.5%

Planning, analysis and evaluation: 11.5%

Requirements

A minimum of a high Grade 6 GCSE in Chemistry although a Grade 7 or above is more of a proven indicator of success at this level. The nature of the subject means a competency in mathematics is needed, ideally with a Grade 6 at GCSE.

A sense of perseverance, commitment and an eagerness to put in the hours outside of lessons is needed, as is a willingness to really extend your knowledge.

Where can it take you?

As well as being a highly enjoyable subject to study, Chemistry is a requirement for degrees relating to Medicine and Veterinary Science, as well as other courses related to these areas.

The numeracy skills also make a Chemistry A-level highly desirable and useful in areas such as accountancy, architecture and engineering. In fact, the analytical nature of the course makes it highly valued in many areas, with the course opening doors to most top degrees and disciplines. Employers also highly value the skills acquired during the course.

Classical Civilisation

Examination board: OCR

The course

This broad and varied course includes the study of some of the world's greatest works of literature, including the epics of Homer and Virgil, the love poetry of Ovid and Sappho and tragedies by Sophocles and Euripides. In addition to this, students will examine the architecture of Greek theatre and artistic representations of Greek drama, as well as engaging with the philosophy of Plato and Seneca.

Component 1: The World of the Hero (40%)

Study of literature in translation: Homer's Iliad and Virgil's Aeneid.

Component 2: Culture and the Arts – Greek Theatre (30%)

Study of visual and material culture, combined with the study of literature in translation.

Component 3: Beliefs and Ideas – Love and Relationships (30%)

Study of classical thought, combined with the study of literature in translation.

Opportunities to learn about the classical world are all around us; you will be encouraged to read widely, and to visit museums, historical sites and the theatre. It is hoped that Classical Civilisation students will wish to take part in a trip of historical, archaeological and cultural exploration to Athens.

Requirements

Grade 6 in English Literature

Why Study Classical Civilisation?

From ideas about empire and democracy to the Olympic games, and from the design of the White House to our expectations of tragedy and comedy, the legacies of ancient Greece and Rome continue to shape our daily lives. Classical Civilisation offers a broad, rich and rewarding study of the literature, material culture and thought of the classical world, which will enable students to acquire an understanding of their social, historical and cultural contexts. Because of its breadth, this subject should appeal to students interested in literature, history, philosophy, art, drama and - more generally - in learning about different cultures.

Where can it take you?

Aside from a degree in some kind of Classics Studies (Classics, Ancient History, Classical Civilisation), the course supports the study of Literature, Philosophy, Drama, Art, History and Politics. It is truly interdisciplinary, so will help students develop the skills of analysis, evaluation and communication needed across the arts, humanities and beyond.

Computer Science

Examination board: OCR

The course

The world is increasingly dominated by digital technology and this means the opportunities in the IT sector are unprecedented. This A-level course opens a door into one of the most thriving sectors of the economy. It aims to demystify computers and programming so that you will learn the principles of how a digital processor works. More importantly, it will help you excel in logic and creative problem-solving, the innovating skills that employers now value so highly.

In the programming module, you will learn about the common facilities of procedural languages, as well as how they are structured and how to write, test and run maintainable programs. The aim is to equip you with the knowledge, skills and understanding required to be able to apply the techniques to any programming language.

Requirements

Some previous experience in Computer Science or ICT is recommended but not essential. You will need at least a Grade 6 in both Maths and English and an understanding of at least one programming language would be extremely beneficial.

Where can it take you?

Computer Science is recognised by the Russell Group of Universities as a well-respected A-level subject, so it is widely accepted as a qualification that demonstrates the application of rigorous logical thought in a disciplined environment. It could be a stepping-stone onto a range of degree courses.

The more obvious routes are to Engineering and Computer Science, but Philosophy and Symbolic Logic are other subjects that have been taken by students who have completed this A-level.



Criminology

Exam board: Eduqas (WJEC)

Overview of the course

The course introduces you to the key elements of Criminology and has close links with Psychology, Sociology and Law.

The course can be completed at two levels -

1. Certificate – which is undertaken in Year 12
2. Diploma – which extends on the Certificate and is taken in Year 13

Both the Certificate and the Diploma are graded in the same way as A Levels.

For the Certificate (Year 12), you will study -

Unit 1: Changing Awareness of Crime

This Unit is internally assessed under timed conditions. The Unit is focused on understanding different types of crime, the reasons why some crimes are underreported and the consequences of this. In addition, you will learn about how the media represents crime and the impact of this on public understanding. Finally, you will learn about media campaigns for reducing crime and being able to design and evaluate your own campaign.

Unit 2: Criminological Theories

This Unit is externally assessed under examination conditions. You will learn about various sociological, psychological and biological explanations for criminal behaviour. You will also learn about, and be able to evaluate, policies that have been introduced to try and reduce offending.

For the Diploma (Year 13), you will study -

Unit 3: Crime Scene to Courtroom

This Unit is internally assessed under timed conditions. You will learn about techniques of criminal investigation and how evidence is processed. In addition, you will learn about the Crown Prosecution Service, how it works, who is involved and be able to evaluate the working of this system.

Unit 4: Crime and Punishment

This Unit is externally assessed under examination conditions. You will learn about the Criminal Justice System, the role and function of punishment and social control in regard to reducing offending. A critical awareness of how these systems work will be essential to this final part of the course.

How is it assessed?

The course is 50% internally controlled assessment and 50% external exams. This is true for both the Certificate and Diploma.

Entry requirements

The usual A-level course entry requirements of 5 GCSE qualifications at Grade 4 or above. Ideally Grade 4 in Maths and English.

What can this lead to?

The course is primarily designed for students who are aiming to progress into Higher Education to study subjects related to Criminology, such as Sociology, Psychology, Law and, of course, Criminology. However, it will also act as a good Level 3 subject that can be used for entering employment.

Why choose this course?

If you are interested in trying to explain the causes of crime, why criminals act in the way that they do, how the criminal justice system operates to manage criminal behaviour and what can be done to reduce crime, then this course would be suitable for you. In addition, the flexibility of the course means that you could just complete the first year (Year 12) and you will gain a relevant Level 3 qualification at the end of it that can enhance your application to University or improve your employability.

Drama and Theatre Studies

Examination board: AQA

The course

Theatre Studies is a unique subject which can relate well to almost any other area of study or career path. There is an emphasis on personal expression, creativity and a high level of interpersonal skill. The focus on written work confirms Theatre Studies as a highly respected academic subject with strong links to the nature and style of English. There will be opportunities for you to take part in a performance either as an actor, director, or as a designer of lighting, sound, set, costume, or puppetry. You will visit local and touring live productions and theatrical screenings. We have in previous years travelled to London where we have seen live west end productions, something that we will hopefully return to in the very near future.

The assessment is divided into three components:

- Drama and theatre: A three-hour written paper on two set plays and on the work of live theatre makers.
- Creating original drama: Practical assessment of a devised piece of theatre and linked to the work of a prescribed theatre practitioner by way of a written portfolio. You will be assessed as a performer, director or designer.
- Making theatre: Practical explorations of three extracts from three different scripted plays. Extract three, in this very component is to be linked to the work of a theatrical practitioner. You will be assessed as a performer, director, or designer. Reflective report analysing and evaluating theatrical interpretation of all three extracts.

Requirements

You will need to attain a good set of academic grades at GCSE, particularly in English. You do not need to have completed a GCSE course in Drama, but you should have gained some theatrical experience in order to assist you in this study either through house drama, annual school productions or wider community theatre. You will be required to put in a lot of extra time for rehearsal and your time management skills will be put to the test. The two most important attributes you can bring to the course are your enthusiasm and teamwork skills.

Where can it take you?

The Drama and Theatre Studies course does not aim to prepare you vocationally for a career in theatre, although the skills you learn on this course would be of tremendous use in such a role. The course has far reaching benefits and is especially useful for people who may wish to pursue a career in law, media, advertising, design, public relations, music, or in fact any field that involves communication - which is most of them. This course is highly respected by Russell Group universities and is highly recommended as a fourth A level for courses such as law and medicine where communication skills and creative thinking are crucial.

Economics

Examination board: Edexcel

The course

Economics is only offered at Sixth Form level and is therefore completely fresh and new to you. You will learn theories to explain the workings of any organisation, be it a business or a country.

This includes looking at supply and demand, monopolies, inequalities in income and distribution of wealth, inflation and unemployment. We apply these theories to look at the environment, housing and the economics of sport and leisure.

In the second year we study the labour market including union influences, international trade, exchange rates and developing economies.

If you are interested in the workings of the world you live in, then this is an ideal course for you. We may have classes with students from JCG and De La Salle and lively debate is positively encouraged.

Requirements

Minimum of a Grade 6 in English and Maths or science. Preferably a Grade 8 in an essay-based subject such as English or History. An interest in current affairs is essential.

Where can it take you?

Universities have a high regard for this subject. Employers see an insight into Economics as a valuable asset. It opens up a wide range of career opportunities, including industry, finance, management, politics, journalism and law.

English Language and Literature

Examination board: Edexcel

The course

If you enjoy both English Literature and English Language at GCSE, then you might not want to give one of them up. English Language and Literature, or English Combined as it's also known, allows you to continue with your own writing, study Literature and explore how language is used in a range of nonfiction texts, including e-communication.

You will develop skills as an independent thinker and be encouraged to explore your own opinions and ideas. You will have the freedom to decide where your interest lies and to tailor your writing to reflect this.

This A level is the study of English in use in the world around us. You will have the opportunity to read a wide range of texts and explore the impact of language, structure and form not just in fiction but also spoken, written and multimodal texts.

You will investigate a range of 'real-life' texts, such as blogs, text messages and emails, and your study of fiction will give you the chance to read the work of highly respected authors, poets and playwrights, both modern and from the literary canon.

Creative writing is assessed in Year 13. You will be encouraged to pursue your interests and given freedom to choose the types of text you want to write.

Requirements

A minimum Grade 6 in English Literature and a Grade 6 in English Language at GCSE, but each student will be considered on their individual merits.

Where can it take you?

English Language and Literature is well respected by all academic institutions and forms an excellent basis for careers in the media, politics, business and legal professions.

It is also a subject that reaches out into other subject areas, offering stimulating points of intersection with: Art, History, Modern Languages, Media Studies, Music, Psychology and Philosophy.

English Literature

Examination board: Edexcel

The course

English Literature is a subject fuelled by ideas, inspiration and imagination. It is also a subject that nurtures writing and communication skills that will be valuable for the rest of your life. If you can communicate, the world is yours.

You will be encouraged to read a wide range of diverse texts; Shakespeare alongside the lyrics of gangster rap or classical poetry alongside pop art.

You will be challenged to assess the value of radically different writing, to explore ideas for yourself and tackle the big questions that have preoccupied the great writers of our literary heritage for centuries.

Requirements

An English Literature Grade 6 or above but we will assess each student on his merits.

Where will it take you?

English Literature is well respected by all academic institutions and forms an excellent basis for careers in business, politics, the media and legal professions. It is also a subject that crosses over into other areas, offering stimulating points of intersection with Art, History, Media Studies, Drama, Philosophy, Music and Psychology.

Film Studies AS/A-level

Examination board: Eduqas

Overview of the course

Students are introduced to American films from the past and the present, as well as a range of recent and contemporary British, independent and global films of varying genres, all intended to broaden their knowledge and understanding of film and the range of responses films can generate. Study of film form, the history of film and its emerging digital future will allow students to apply a critical analysis to a wide variety of texts, some chosen by Eduqas, some chosen by teachers and students. Examples include *Casablanca*, *City of God*, *Bonnie & Clyde*, *Selma* and *Shaun of the Dead*.

Production work is a crucial part of this specification and is integral to learners' study of film. Studying a diverse range of films from several different contexts is designed to give learners the opportunity to apply their knowledge and understanding of how films are constructed to their own filmmaking and screenwriting. This is intended to enable learners to create high quality film and screenplay work, as well as provide an informed filmmaker's perspective on their own study.

How is it assessed?

AS: two exams, 35% each – Paper 1 and 2 are each 1 hour and 30 mins. Coursework, 30%.

A Level: two exams, 35% each –Both 2 hours and 30 mins. Coursework, 30%.

Entry requirements

English Language Grade 5 at GCSE or higher is advisable.

What can this lead to?

Film Studies can lead into careers in diverse and exciting industries such as film, television, journalism, media production, advertising, marketing, creative writing and teaching. It complements subjects such as Media Studies, English Literature, Drama, Sociology, Photography, ICT and Psychology.

Why choose this course?

Film is one of the main cultural innovations of the 20th Century and a major art form of the last hundred years. Film is also one of the most powerful global means of communicating the local, national, and transnational stories that matter to humankind. Understanding how film holds a mirror to society allows us to be culturally literate and engaged citizens. The study of cinema allows you to explore the interconnectedness of personal visions, artistic and technological developments, and social changes, as well as the processes by which cultures and nations are defined through audio-visual means.

French

Examination board: AQA

The course

Students will foster a range of transferable skills including communication, critical thinking, research skills and creativity, focusing on how French-speaking society has been shaped, socially and culturally, and how it continues to change. During the first year, students will study aspects of the social context, together with aspects of the artistic life of French-speaking countries focusing on music and cinema.

In the second year, further aspects of the social background are covered, focusing on issues such as life for those on the margins of French-speaking society, as well as looking at the positive influences that diversity brings. Students will also study aspects of the political landscape in a French-speaking country, looking at immigration from the political perspective and at the way in which political power is expressed through action such as strikes and demonstrations.

Students will also have the opportunity to study both a film and a literary text linked to the topics covered broadening their knowledge of French culture and society. They will be assessed in the four skills of speaking, writing, listening and reading.

Requirements

A minimum of grade 6 in GCSE French.

Where can it take you?

Studying languages will give you excellent and varied career opportunities, together with life-long skills that will be stimulating, thought provoking, mind broadening, enjoyable, sociable, diverse and wide ranging. In today's world a language is a highly marketable qualification.

Communication skills, knowledge of languages, an understanding of foreign cultures, flexibility of mind, analytical ability and research skills are much in demand in a great many fields. Modern Language students tend to be mature, flexible and able to cope with the unfamiliar.

Studying a language does not narrowly confine you to any one area of future study or employment. Your options could include journalism, the media and arts, banking, accountancy, management, administration, marketing, the civil service, teaching, professional language work. Very often, language students go on to combine their language with another subject such as law, business studies, engineering and teaching.

Geography

Examination board: Edexcel

The course

Studying Geography at Victoria College is an excellent opportunity to learn about the physical and human environment in an exciting and varied manner.

Geography A level students must undertake four days of fieldwork as part of their course and our trip is completed in conjunction with the Geography Department at JCG. This year (2021/22 this will take place on Jersey however in a typical year, we would visit the mainland, staying at a Field Studies Centre usually in Devon, where we can see practical examples of the topics and themes covered. (Please note there is an additional charge for this field trip if/when it is possible to visit the mainland.)

We follow the Edexcel course, which develops some of the themes studied at GCSE, as well as introducing new aspects of the subject.

Year 12: Tectonics, Coasts, Globalisation and Diverse Places

Year 13: Water and Carbon Cycles, Superpowers, Migration, Identity and Sovereignty
Students carry out an independent investigation, which is worth 20% of the A level and will be internally assessed.

Requirements

Ideally GCSE Geography at Grade 6 but each student is considered on their merits.

Where can it take you?

Geography is regarded as a facilitating subject by Russell Group universities and other prestigious universities. It can be counted as a science or arts subject so can benefit all prospective university entrants. Geography students learn to make reasoned judgments, analyse material and develop many transferable skills so this A level is highly regarded as an academic qualification by employers.



Health and Social Care - Extended Diploma

Examination board: Pearson / Edexcel

The course

A two-year course of five lessons a week, studying four Units. Two Units are externally examined and two Units are internally assessed assignments. Students with an interest in working in a Health or Social Care career in the future, will be able to learn about possible careers in the sector. The course enables students to develop their understanding of the experience of patients or clients, in both community and hospital settings. Work experience is not part of the Extended Certificate course.

How is it assessed?

The two-year course is assessed by an examination in Year 12 and in Year 13. There will also be an assignment completed in Year 12 and Year 13. Students receive a grade overall of Pass, Merit, or Distinction, equivalent to A-Level Grades E, C or A.

Requirements

A minimum of five Grade 4 or above GCSEs, including Maths and English.

Where can it take you?

This course would complement A-Levels for those considering Nursing, Social Work, Youth Work, Teaching or any Health or Social Care related career.

Health and Social Care - Diploma

Examination board: Pearson / Edexcel

The course

A vocational course for students who are interested in the caring professions as a career. The course includes placements in a number of settings, including hospitals, care homes, community care and schools. With level 3 the equivalent of two A-levels, students can choose an additional A-level to study alongside the course. Students study topics such as Human Lifespan Development, Psychology, Principles of Safe Practice and Working in Health and Social care. They are encouraged to investigate several possible career paths to stretch themselves, both personally and professionally, in their placements. Work experience contributes towards the understanding of the topics studied in lessons and is highly valued by vocational Degree courses such as Nursing, Midwifery, Psychiatric Nursing, Radiography, Physiotherapy and Social Work. The course was designed, in conjunction with Universities, to include research skills and opportunities to demonstrate qualities such as empathy, time management and the ability to cope in stressful environments. This sets students apart from those studying only traditional A Levels.

How is it assessed?

Students are assessed by a combination of externally marked exams (40%) and internally assessed assignments (60%). The assignments are set by the exam board and assessment always occurs immediately after the Unit has been studied. Students are awarded a double grade of PP up to D*D*, equivalent to A Level grades EE to A*A*.

Requirements

A minimum of five Grade 4 or above GCSEs, including Maths and English.

Where can it take you?

Around 40% of students accessing higher education have a BTEC. The course is particularly suitable for those applying for Health or Social Care related Degrees (with the exception of Medicine or Dentistry). Primary School teaching is also a common career path.

History

Examination board: Edexcel

The course

History A level will provide you with a clear understanding of some of the key historical developments in the 20th Century and some of the key political issues that the world is facing today. It will help build up your essential skills of analysis and evaluation and develop your awareness of the complexity of human affairs.

You should develop the ability to reach independent judgments based on the analysis of historical evidence and learn to argue a case convincingly both orally and on paper. Lessons will involve group discussions, debates and presentations.

This A level course covers four of the most fascinating periods in history:

- Germany from 1918-1989
- Italy from 1911-1946
- Warfare from 1790-1918
- The causes of the First World War

This is a piece of coursework that is a personal investigation. The course includes a detailed consideration of historical sources as well as analysis of causes of events and of change.

Requirements

A History GCSE Grade 6 is desirable, but students can take this A level even if they have not studied it at GCSE. They will need to demonstrate excellent written analytical skills.

Where can it take you?

History is an especially well-respected subject. It has links to most other subjects, providing their context.

It gives an excellent grounding for those wishing to study law, politics at university or careers where communication skills are important.

Information Technology

Extended Certificate/Diploma

Exam board: OCR

Overview of the course

Cambridge Technicals are vocational qualifications at Level 3 for students aged 16+. They are designed with the workplace in mind and provide a high-quality alternative to A Levels, with a great range of subjects to choose from. Vocational education is not just about results, it's about educating people in the knowledge and skills required for employment, and for the community as a whole. It's also about developing the behaviours and attributes needed to progress and succeed in education and in work.

How is it assessed?

Two compulsory examinable Units which make up 50% of the course and can be certificated to achieve a Certificate Award in the first year. Examinations can be taken in both the January and June series. The full Extended Certificate or Diploma will be awarded following the completion of three coursework-based Units, which make up the other 50% of the course.

Entry requirements

GCSE ICT or Cambridge National in IT is advantageous, but not a prerequisite for the course. A good standard of Mathematics is advantageous, as is an ability to communicate both orally and in writing. An interest in latest and emerging technology is highly desirable, as well as an ability to confidently use technical IT terminology.

What can this lead to?

Students will develop professional, personal and social skills through interaction with peers, stakeholders and clients, as well as theoretical knowledge and understanding to underpin these skills. These support the transferable skills required by Universities and employers such as communication, problem solving, time management, research and analytical skills.

Why choose this course?

This new Technical Award has been developed in conjunction with IT employers, Universities and IT experts, to produce a qualification that will equip students with the knowledge and understanding they will require for the ever-expanding digital world. Success in this qualification will set students apart from their peers and give them a distinct advantage in terms of general employability skills.

Mathematics & Further Maths

Examination board: OCR

The course

Maths is one of the most challenging A level courses at Victoria College. It requires commitment but its rewards are knowledge, satisfaction and precise thinking. The course provides students with a wide range of activities and challenges. Mathematics and Further Mathematics not only develop topics covered in GCSE such as algebra, statistics and geometry, but also extend into new areas such as calculus, mechanics, discrete mathematics and numerical methods.

The mechanics content will allow physics students to successfully apply mathematical skills to physical problems.

Mathematics is one of very few subjects that offer the ability to complete two A level qualifications. The Further Mathematics course also offers a degree of flexibility, and content can be tailored to suit individual students.

Requirements

A good general standard of Mathematics and, in particular, good algebraic skills are required. Even the best students find parts of the course challenging and you should have achieved Grade 7 at GCSE to begin the course, and Grade 8 to begin Further Mathematics.

Where can it take you?

Mathematics is required by a range of students, from those intending to read it at university to those needing particular skills to support other subjects (particularly science) or their chosen careers. The course provides a good understanding of statistics, which is essential for anyone wishing take psychology or sociology.

Media Studies

Examination board: OCR

The course

To make a film, write an article or design an effective website, you need to understand how much skill is involved, both in handling the information and understanding how people could be influenced by it. Media A level achieves this. It is a blend of imaginative creativity, academic theory and IT skills.

The course allows students to select their path of study, choosing which media to specialise in and which case studies to research. Mostly, it is just interesting and allows you to gain an academic perspective on your own knowledge and use of the media.

There are two modules in each year: one creative coursework production and one theoretical exam. The practical productions provide an opportunity to learn relevant, modern media production skills and to put your imagination and understanding of the media into practice. Options include print, film, audio or web-based projects. Students learn how to work in each medium and then pick one to continue as their main coursework piece.

The theoretical exam is based on understanding through text analysis how the media communicates messages and values and how the media business sector operates, particularly the film industry.

Requirements

Students with creative, technical and academic ability are all equally suited. A contemporary interest in the media is essential. Media is no 'soft option' and many students remark that, whilst enjoyable, it requires more effort than their other subjects.

Where can it take you?

Every career requires some interaction and knowledge of the media. The portfolio of work that the student builds over the course will help every university application and job interview. There are obviously many media degrees and career opportunities.

Music

Examination board: Edexcel



The course

Music is not just about playing an instrument or singing, it is about affirming a lifelong passion for music. It easily combines performance with being a rigorous academic subject which sets students up well for university study. Universities are well aware of this and the skills learnt involve written, analytical, practical and social/personal skills. A-level musicians have long played an important leading role in both the Music Department and the school community.

There are three components assessed as a written exam:

Unit 1: Performing 30%

- A programme (externally assessed) of at least 2 contrasting pieces lasting a minimum of minutes using one or more of the following: Solo piece on one or more instrument/s or voice,
- Ensemble performance

Unit 2: Composing 30%

- Two separate pieces of music with a combined duration of at least 4m 30s
- Score and recording are externally assessed

Unit 3: Listening and Appraising 40%

- Study and analysis of prescribed works including, Blues and Popular Song, Film music, Baroque Sacred Music and Romantic Music
- Evaluating works aurally

Requirements

Music GCSE Grade 6 or above with a 6 in the Listening and Appraising written paper. ABRSM Grade 5 (minimum) standard on chosen instrument / voice. Familiarity with music theory and notation up to ABRSM Grade 5 standard. Regular tuition on your main instrument.

Where can it take you?

Music is valued highly by universities and employers because it is recognised that musicians are motivated and committed with an excellent work ethic. For some non-music courses, it can be the favoured third A level. As well as the obvious career as a performer, musicians go into many sectors including medicine, the legal profession, accountancy, teaching and acting. For example, the airport at Dubai is run by an English musician. (Ask the Director of Music, he is a friend!). Top universities like music as an A level subject, even if you intend to study a different discipline.

Music Technology

Examination board: Edexcel

Overview of the course

On this course you will learn how to use production tools and techniques to capture, edit, process and mix an audio recording. You will be creating, editing, manipulating and structuring sounds to produce a technology-based composition. You will gain the knowledge and understanding of recording and production techniques and principles, which will be tested by answering questions on a series of unfamiliar commercial recordings supplied by Edexcel. You will also have to apply your knowledge and understanding of editing, mixing and production techniques.

How is it assessed?

The Edexcel Advanced GCE in Music Technology consists of two externally examined papers and two non-examined assessment components. The non-examined components consist of a multitrack recording and a technology-based composition. Students must submit their non-examined assessment (NEA) and complete the examinations in May/June in the year of certification.

Entry requirements

Grade 6 in Music GCSE is desirable.

What can this lead to?

This course has enabled past pupils to become: Studio Engineers, Commercial Composers, Music Journalists, Record Producers, BBC Presenters, Live Audio Engineers, Record Producers in the UK and America, Tour Managers and Recording Artists.

Why choose this course?

Choose this course if you are interested in music production in all its forms. You will gain knowledge that will equip you to record, analyse, compose, mix, remix, repair, and arrange popular music in the 21st Century, whilst understanding the history and procedures of the studio in all its forms.

Philosophy

Examination board: AQA (7172)

The course

Put the question 'What is Philosophy?' to 100 Philosophers and you will probably get 100 different answers, but some common themes will also probably emerge. So, Philosophy is: thinking fundamentally about the nature of reality; refusing to accept anything without examining it; the pursuit of wisdom; arguing from the obvious to the surprising; a collection of questions that are of deep interest and for which there is (often) no experimental way of finding an answer; being logical and precise; seeing how ideas hang together; taking a closer look at things everyone ordinarily takes for granted; being interested in the quest for knowledge and truth through the application of reason. It is a subject that really comes alive when you start to try and think about these things for yourself.

As Bertrand Russell puts it: *'If the study of philosophy has any value at all...it must be only indirectly, through its effects upon the lives of those who study it.'*

A Level PHILOSOPHY is made up of four compulsory topics:

Paper 1

- Epistemology: This is probably closest to what people think of as 'pure' philosophy – questions about perception, what we know and how we know it.
- Moral Philosophy: This is about questions of right and wrong, how we should live, the foundations for different ways of being ethical, and the links between theory and practice (relating particularly to four key topics: stealing, telling lies, eating animals, and violence in computer games).

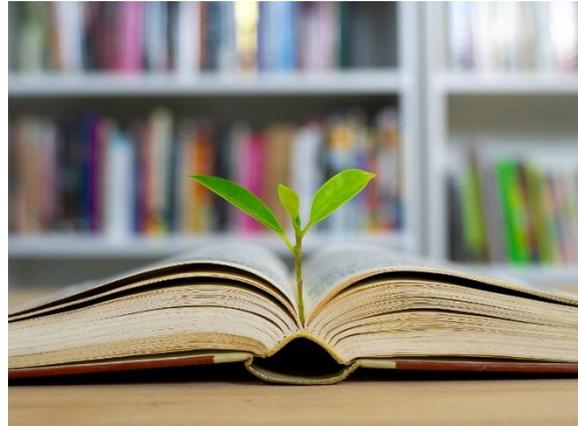
Paper 2

- Metaphysics of God: This is applying philosophical method to a particularly interesting area of discussion and debate.
- Metaphysics of Mind: Questions about consciousness, personal identity artificial intelligence, free-will, and advances in neuro-science, make this one of the most contested and important areas of study in science, psychology and philosophy.

There are two three-hour exams. On each subject area you have to answer five questions for 3, 5, 5, 12 and 25 marks respectively, ranging from the shorter questions showing your knowledge and understanding of core concepts and methods of philosophy (60%) to the longer essay questions that show your ability to analyse and evaluate (40%).

Requirements

Religious Studies GCSE (Long or Short Course) is not a necessity although some topics in Philosophy of Religion and Ethics are relevant and, if you do have it, a Grade 6 or above would be helpful and a good indicator of your potential to do well. Just as useful will be an enquiring mind, a love of clear thinking, a philosophical disposition, and some proficiency in English so that you can thrive in discussion and debate and tackle with confidence the longer answers in the written exam.



Where can it take you?

Type 'Philosophy' into the UCAS website and you will find 1,155 different single and joint honours courses that involve Philosophy at British universities.

It is hard to think of an area where it would not have some relevance - from English to Economics, History, Art, International Relations, Law, Maths, Physics, Psychology, Theology, Politics, Sociology - and the same is true at A Level too: it would be a good companion to either the Humanities or the Sciences. If you are looking for a subject that is well respected, traditional, theoretical, analytic, and which goes well with other subjects then Philosophy may well be for you. The emphasis it places on reasoning, the clear and concise presentation of ideas, constructive discussion and critical thinking is recognised as desirable by almost every type of employer in both the public and private sectors.

Physical Education

Examination board: AQA

The Course

The Physical Education course is designed to develop a candidate's knowledge, skills and understanding of the factors that influence the quality of sports performance.

Candidates will be challenged to apply their knowledge, skills and understanding of physiological, psychological and socio-cultural factors to a variety of sporting situations at elite and grass-root levels.

We have a wide range of sport choices for practical coursework and access to visiting Sports Science lecturers. You will have the opportunity to perform or analyse sporting techniques, including comparing yourself with an elite performer in order to develop your own physical and mental performance.

Requirements

Ideally a Grade 6 in GCSE PE, with 60% in the theory exam, or Grade 6 or above in GCSE Biology.

A healthy interest in a wide range of sporting activities is advisable, with a genuine passion for understanding what factors affect sports. The A level is assessed predominantly through written exams and written coursework so proficient English is required.

Candidates who do not have a GCSE in sport will be considered.

Where can it take you?

A level Physical Education will open up many avenues both in terms of career prospects and higher education. Specific career paths could be physiotherapy, sports rehabilitation, psychology, teaching, sports coaching, sport related media, sports recreation or sports science to professional teams.

This A level supports degree applications for a wide range of studies. Past pupils have gone on to study law, medicine, accountancy as well as sports-related degrees.

Physics

Examination board: AQA

The course

Physics has been called ‘the unbelievable in pursuit of the unimaginable’. It is a physicist’s job to do the imagining. Can you get more special than that? Physics encompasses the study of everything in the universe, from the largest galaxies to the smallest subatomic particles. Moreover, it’s the basis of many other sciences, including chemistry, oceanography, seismology and astronomy.

The AQA course we follow has plenty of up-to-date science, like Dark Energy or the purpose of the new Large Hadron Collider, but also retains the traditional elements needed to take the subject further. We use two textbooks, the AQA designated course book and a reference text to enable you to get a second point of view.

You will be expected to read around the subject from popular science books and keep up to date with developments using science blogs and traditional magazines like the New Scientist.

First year

Particles and quantum mechanics, electricity, materials and waves.

Second year

Fields, mechanics, thermal-nuclear, and a unit chosen from five options (Cosmology, Medical Physics, Applied Physics, Electronics and Major Turning Points in Physics) by teacher and group in consultation.

Topics covered include: The strong Nuclear Force holding nuclei together, Antiparticles Quarks and Leptons, Quantum Phenomena, Resistivity, Electromotive Force, Vector motion, Motion of projectiles, Properties of materials, Wave behaviour, Superposition of waves, Diffraction and interference patterns, Simple Harmonic Motion, Vibrations and Resonance, Gravity, Electric Fields, Magnetic Fields.

Requirements

A passion to know how everything works and why everything happens. We recommend students have a Grade 7 at GCSE for both Physics and Maths.

Politics

Examination board: Edexcel A level Government and Politics

The course

Ever watched the news and wondered what exactly it is that governments do? What goes on in the Houses of Parliament? And who is Black Rod? Well, this course will help you to understand the political discourse that is so commonplace in our world today. Make sense of Brexit, the United Nations, the love for Greta Thunberg and why it was that Boris Johnson won the 2019 election.

The course is split into three parts as below:

Paper 1: UK Politics

- democracy and participation, political parties, electoral systems and voting behaviour and the media
- three core political ideas of liberalism, conservatism and socialism

Paper 2: UK Government

- the Constitution, Parliament, Prime Minister and Executive and relationships between the branches including the Supreme Court
- one non-core political idea: nationalism

Paper 3: Comparative Politics

- The state and globalisation
- Global governance: political and judicial
- Global governance: economic and environmental
- Power and developments
- Regionalism and the European Union
- Comparative theories

Assessment is by examination

There are three exam papers, all taken at the end of the two-year course. Each is worth 33% and last two hours. There are a mix of short and long answer questions.

Requirements

An interest in current affairs and politics is vital to be successful on this course. You will be a keen reader of news and may hold political views yourself. You may be taking other subjects that are of an essay nature, although this is not essential. You will also need good literacy skills, as responses will mainly be in the form of essays, although these will not always be long. Finally, you should be interested in debate, as much of the lesson will involve oracy and discussion.

Where can it take you?

Studying Politics can help you in a number of ways. It is of interest in its own right and will help you gain a better understanding of the world around you. Many students combine their study of Politics with subjects such as History, Geography or Economics, as these social science subjects complement each other well. Students may go on to study Politics at undergraduate level, combine it with other subjects or as part of a Politics, Philosophy and Economics course. Careers include pretty much anything where you need strong communication skills and a good understanding of current affairs and often Politics students go on to work in the Civil Service, Media, local or national government and for political parties.

Product Design

Examination board: OCR

The course

Product Design develops your capacity to think creatively and, as a critical thinker, you are able to adapt technical knowledge and understanding in different design situations.

Throughout the course you will learn critical thinking and problem-solving skills within a creative environment, enabling you to develop and make prototypes/products that solve real-world problems and consider your own and others' needs, wants, aspirations and values.

Product Design is focused towards consumer products and applications, their analysis in respect of materials, components, marketability, and the selection and uses in industrial and situations.

Year 12: You will learn to identify market needs and opportunities for new products, initiate and develop design solutions and make and test prototypes and products.

Year 13: You will learn to understand and apply processes of iterative designing and put them into practice.

Assessment is by:

- Design Principles (Knowledge and Understanding): Exam of one hour 30 minutes worth 26.7%
- Problem Solving and Critical Evaluation: Exam of one hour 45 minutes worth 23.3%
- Iterative Design Project: 65 hours - worth 50%

What do I need?

A GCSE Grade 6 in Design and Technology. You will need to be open to taking design risks, be intellectually curious, show innovation and enterprise and work collaboratively to develop and refine ideas.

Where can it take you?

With a focus on iterative design, this course will equip you with valuable critical thinking skills needed for higher education and industry where you can expect to make a contribution to 21st Century creative, engineering and manufacturing businesses.

Psychology

Examination board: OCR

The course

Psychology is the scientific study of human behaviour and the mind. It offers a unique educational experience that develops a distinctive and broad set of skills. It is located in scientific method and allows scope for extensive evaluation from a range of perspectives.

Students will learn to interpret and critically assess scientific data, and to research and critically evaluate a range of sources. Psychology is a popular combination with subjects such as Science, Humanities, English and Business Studies or Economics.

There are three components:

Research Methods (two hour written exam worth 30% of the total marks). Students conduct their own practical work involving four key techniques: self-report, observation, correlation and experimentation as well as understanding how descriptive and inferential statistics can be used to analyse the data collected. Students are encouraged to reflect on their own research as they develop vital investigative skills and an appreciation of the principles of empirical scientific enquiry.

Psychological themes (two hour written exam worth 35% of the total marks). An introduction to key themes. The selection of 10 classic and 10 contemporary studies enables students to appreciate how psychological knowledge and understanding develop over time.

Applied psychology (two hour written exam worth 35% of the total marks). A compulsory section on issues in mental health and then two further applied options; Criminal Psychology and Sport and Exercise Psychology. Students will consider the background, key research and application of six topics within each of these two options.

Criminal Psychology

What makes a criminal (Biological)

Collection and processing of forensic

Evidence (Biological)

Collection of evidence (Cognitive)

Psychology and the courtroom (cognitive) Crime prevention (Social)

Effect of imprisonment (Social)

Sport and Exercise Psychology

Arousal and anxiety (Biological)

Audience effects (Social)

Exercise and mental health (Biological)

Motivation (Cognitive)

Personality (Cognitive)

Performing with others (Social)

What do I need?

A good understanding of statistics and a good foundation in both Maths, English and science (particularly to understand data collection and analysis).

Where can it take you?

For many careers some knowledge of Psychology is essential, including teaching, personnel work, law, clinical health, prison and Police service roles.

This is essential for a degree to become an Applied Psychologist and to support the additional professional training and further study afterwards.



Sociology AS and A-level

Examination Board: AQA

Overview of the course

Sociology is about the study of contemporary society. Research methods, such as surveys, interviews and observations are used to uncover and bring to light aspects of social life that may go unnoticed. For example, why is it that girls outperform boys at GCSE and A Level? What is going on in schools and in the home that contributes to this national trend? The topics we cover in Year 12 are Education, Families and Households and Research Methods. In Year 13 we focus on Crime and Deviance as well as Beliefs in Society.

How is it assessed?

AS: Paper 1: Education and Methods in Context (50%) 1 hour and 30 minutes

AS: Paper 2: Research Methods and Topics in Sociology (Families and Households) (50%)
1 hour and 30 minutes

A Level: Paper 1: Education with Theory and Methods (33.3%) 2 hours

A Level: Paper 2: Topics in Sociology (Families and Households / Beliefs in Society)
(33.3%) 2 hours

A Level: Paper 3: Crime and Deviance with Theory and Methods (33.3%) 2 hours

Entry requirements

As the course is entirely exam-based, with an essay-focused structure, a minimum Grade 4 (ideally Grade 5), in English Language and Literature at GCSE is required.

What can this lead to?

People who study Sociology gain a range of valuable skills such as extended written argument construction and appropriate selection of evidence to support points being made. More importantly you will gain a good grounding in the main ideas, concepts and arguments that are shaping much of the debate around contemporary social issues. Students who take this subject often find that they apply for courses at University to study the Social Sciences, Humanities, Internal Relations, Media, Health Care, Teaching and Social Work.

Why choose this course?

Sociology is the study of human societies, our behaviour and how we experience life. It also deals with global issues like migration and globalisation. How do social changes affect people at every level of their social life? How does our educational system affect our values and perspectives? Have gender roles in the home really changed since your grandparents' time? What role does religion have in contemporary society? How far has Government policy shaped your experience of education, your family life and how much crime there is in your local community?

Spanish

Examination board: AQA

The course

Students will foster a range of transferable skills including communication, critical thinking, research skills and creativity, focusing on how Spanish-speaking society has been shaped, socially and culturally, and how it continues to change. During the first year, students will study aspects of the social context, together with aspects of the artistic life of Spanish-speaking countries focusing on music and cinema.

In the second year, further aspects of the social background are covered, focusing on issues such as life for those on the margins of Spanish-speaking society, as well as looking at the positive influences that diversity brings. Students will also study aspects of the political landscape in a Spanish-speaking country, looking at immigration from the political perspective and at the way in which political power is expressed through action such as strikes and demonstrations.

Requirements

A minimum of grade 6 in GCSE Spanish.

Where can it take you?

Spanish is one of the most widely spoken languages in the world making it an appealing and prevalent choice for A level study. The rich, diverse and fascinating cultures of the Hispanic world will leave you with a curiosity to experience the vast number of Spanish speaking countries for yourself. Spain itself is the second most visited country in the world! From Spain to Latin America, you will discover a gateway to incredible landscapes, diverse arts, unique traditions and customs, wonderful culinary delights and rich histories through the study of this beautiful language. Furthermore, in today's global economy studying Spanish can open a wide range of career opportunities for you. The discipline of studying a language is extremely well regarded by both employers and universities. They know that a linguist is likely to have strong communication skills and that this will be an asset to them.



**Victoria College
Mont Millais
St Helier, Jersey JE1 4HT**

**01534 638200
admin@vcj.sch.je
www.victoriacollege.je**

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