The Royal Belfast Academical Institution

Sixth Form Subject Choices Information

(available September 2026)

Dear Parent/Guardian,

The RBAI Sixth Form experience promotes academic excellence and enrichment alongside a vast array of extra-curricular opportunities. In anticipation of your son's progression to the Lower Sixth in September 2026, we require him to make important and informed subject choices. Though we ask for a provisional choice now, it may be possible for changes to be made at the Year 13 Registration Day on 24th August 2026. It is important that all pupils attend on this day.

Pupils wishing to enter the Sixth Form will normally require a **minimum of 12 points** (A*= 4 points, A = 3 points, B = 2 points, C* = 1 ½ points, C = 1 point) and undertake, a minimum of, 3 AS or equivalents. Pupils are generally expected to have achieved at least a Grade B or a high Grade C* at GCSE level in the subjects they wish to continue with in the Sixth Form. A small number of subjects require an A grade. If a subject is oversubscribed, criteria may be enhanced. Returning to the Sixth Form is also dependent upon a pupil's disciplinary record, an average attendance of 95%, and the professional judgement of staff that a pupil has the self-motivation to follow a post-16 course. Credit may also be given to the contribution a pupil has made to the extra-curricular life of the school.

RBAI offers a very broad range of courses in the Sixth Form. Further details, (such as exam board, course content, modular weighting), can be found in the '*Sixth Form Subject Choices Booklet*' which has been issued electronically to all Year 12 pupils. (This is also available on the Curriculum section of the school website.) As well as consulting with this document, your son should liaise closely with subject teachers prior to selecting his courses. In addition to offering an extensive suite of A Levels, pupils can also opt to study BTEC courses.
The BTECs we offer include:

- BTEC Diploma in Sport which is equivalent to two A Levels. Mr Peak (Head of PE) will be able to offer more specific advice regarding the suitability of this course for your son.
- BTEC Extended Certificate in Engineering which is equivalent to one A-Level, which is taught in collaboration with Belfast Metropolitan College (Millfield Campus). Mr Wilson (Science) can be contacted regarding queries about this course.
- BTEC IT – this is offered as an Extended Certificate which is equivalent to one A Level. It should **not** be selected in addition to Computer Science. Members of the ICT department will be able to provide further guidance.

More information on BTEC Courses can be found by following the link below:

https://qualifications.pearson.com/en/qualifications/btec-nationals/btec-nationals-2016.html

Yours sincerely,

Mr. J. Allen
Vice-Principal Curriculum

The Royal Belfast Academical Institution

Pupil name: _____ Parent/Guardian Signature: _____

Please complete this Form and return to Mr Allen by Monday 16th March

BLOCK A	BLOCK B	BLOCK C	BLOCK D	BLOCK E
Business Studies	Art	Biology	Biology	BTEC Sport (double)
Chemistry	BTEC IT	BTEC Sport (double)	BTEC Engineering	Further Maths
French	Business Studies	Business Studies	Chemistry	Latin
German	English Literature	Computer Science	Economics	
Music	Further Maths	Geography	History	
Physics	Geography	History	Life and Health Sciences	
Politics	Mathematics	Physics	Mathematics	
Sports Science		Religious Studies (Philosophy & Ethics)	Media Studies	
Technology			Spanish	

- Please choose **a maximum of one subject from any Block**, **leaving blank spaces** where required.
- Most pupils choose 3 subjects. There may be an option to study **4 subjects for those who are likely to score 28 points or higher** in their GCSE subjects.
- If you are not intending to return to RBAI after your GCSEs, please write **'No Return' in Block A**.

BLOCK A	BLOCK B	BLOCK C	BLOCK D	BLOCK E

Notes

- If you are studying Further Mathematics, please indicate this in Blocks B & E (2 A Level subjects) and you should not choose Mathematics as another choice. A pupil wishing to study Further Mathematics and Latin should speak directly to Mr Allen.
- If you are studying BTEC Sport, then this must be selected in Blocks C & E.
- Pupils wishing to study A Level Maths should have achieved a minimum of a B grade in GCSE Further Maths. Pupils who have not studied GCSE Further Maths are required to achieve an A grade in GCSE Maths from modules M4 & M8.
- Classes of 5 or less run on a reduced timetable. A minimum of 3 pupils will generally be required for a subject to run. Under exceptional circumstances, if supported by BoG, a class of 1 or 2 pupils may run. Latin will require a minimum of 2 pupils to run.
- Pupils intending to study Medicine, Dentistry, Veterinary Science and Biomedical Science will usually be expected to take Biology and Chemistry at A Level.
- Potential applicants to Medicine should **not** choose Further Mathematics.
- Those seeking to do Mathematics/Engineering/Actuary/Sciences at highly competitive universities (e.g. Oxford, Cambridge, Imperial, Durham) are strongly encouraged to consider Further Mathematics at A Level. Some universities will also require Physics for Engineering courses.
- Those considering applications to the Republic of Ireland should be aware that some universities may not accept applied/vocational qualifications – this includes BTECs and a small number of A Level subjects.
- All pupils must complete careful research around courses and institutions before they make their subject choices – see Mr Leathley (Head of Higher Education) for any queries.

- If there are further queries, pupils should speak with Mr Allen (Vice Principal) or Mr Peak (Head KS5).

Contents

Art & Design

This A Level subject is best suited to those candidates who have achieved a grade B or above at GCSE. It is a course essential for pupils seeking a career in art, design or architecture where the submission of a creative portfolio is expected as part of the university selection process.

The specification followed at A Level is offered by Eduqas and is a linear 2-year course, decoupled from AS level as a standalone course. The content indicated below is followed across the 2 years with Component 1 Personal Investigation completed for the December of Year 14 and Component 2, the External Set Assignment, starting in the January and finishing before A Level study leave.

The Personal Investigation consists of two integrated constituent parts:
Part 1.
A major in-depth critical, practical and theoretical investigative project/portfolio and outcome/s based on themes and subject matter that have personal significance.
Part2.
An extended written element of 1000 words minimum, which may contain images and texts and must clearly relate to practical and theoretical work using an appropriate working vocabulary and specialist terminology.

- Both the practical/theoretical work and the written element will be assessed together using the assessment objectives. Learners will be required to select, evaluate and present their work for assessment.
- The Personal Investigation will be determined by the learner and teacher, assessed by the teacher and externally moderated.
- No time limit: duration to be determined by the centre.

The Externally Set Assignment consists of two parts:
Part 1: Preparatory study period

- The externally set assignment materials are to be released to learners from 1 February (in the second year of the course) and will consist of a series of visual and written stimuli, which are to be presented to the learner at the start of the preparatory study period.
- One of the stimuli is to be selected by the learner and used as a starting point from which to elicit a personal response.
- Responses are developed during the preparatory study period. They should take the form of critical, practical and theoretical preparatory work/supporting studies which inform the resolution of ideas in the 15 hours sustained focus study.
- The start of the preparatory study period is defined as the date upon which the externally set assignment materials are presented to the learner. The preparatory study period may commence on or after 1 February. The preparatory study period finishes upon commencement of the sustained focus work.
- Start and finish dates of the preparatory study period to be determined by the centre, considering the May deadline for the submission of internally assessed marks to WJEC.

Part 2: 15-hour period of sustained focus work

- The resolution of learners' ideas from the preparatory work must be completed during the designated 15 hours and they must show how their planning relates to the outcome/s.
- The period of sustained focus work must be completed under supervised conditions.
- Centres determine the scheduling of the supervised sustained focus sessions, considering the May deadline for the submission of internally assessed marks to WJEC. Both the preparatory work and sustained focus work will be assessed together, using the assessment objectives. Learners will be required to select, evaluate and present their work for assessment. The Externally Set Assignment will be set by WJEC, assessed by the teacher and externally moderated.

Biology

This course follows the CCEA specification and aims to develop an interest in, and respect for, living organisms.

Throughout the course, pupils develop a range of transferable skills such as data collection, data handling, analytical skills, innovation & creative thinking, critical thinking & drawing conclusions, time management & planning, working accurately and safely both individually and with others, practical and enquiry skills, decision making, communication skills, numeracy and ICT. This combination of biology-specific and general skills means that biologists are versatile and competitive in the job market.

Areas where career opportunities exist include: Research, Health Care, Environmental Management and Conservation, Education, Biotechnology, Forensic Science, Business and Industry, Economics, Mathematics, Politics, Journalism and Art.

Unit	Content	Nature of Assessment	Tests Time
AS 1	Molecules & Cells	External / Written Test	1 hour 30 min.
AS 2	Organisms & Biodiversity	External / Written Test	1 hour 30 min.
AS 3	Assessment of Practical Skills	(a) Internal Assessment (b) External / Written Test on practical skills	(a) During class (b) 1hour
A2 1	Physiology, Coordination & Control, and Ecosystems	External / Written Test	2 hours 15 min.
A2 2	Biochemistry, Genetics & Evolutionary Trends	External / Written Test	2 hours 15 min.
A2 3	Assessment of Practical Skills	(a) Internal Assessment (b) External / Written Test on practical skills	(a) During class (b) 1 hour 15min.

Pupils choosing A Level Biology will need to have attained a minimum of a high B grade at GCSE level.

BTEC Qualifications

BTEC Nationals are widely recognised by industry and higher education as the signature vocational qualification at Level 3. They are administered by Pearson, the UK's largest awarding body. They provide progression to the workplace either directly or via study at a higher level, whether it be further education or university. Well over 100,000 BTEC pupils apply to UK universities every year and their BTECs are accepted by over 150 UK universities and higher education institutes for relevant degree programmes either on their own or in combination with A s. As always, it is recommended that pupils should check the entry requirements for degree programmes with specific higher education providers.

BTECs are vocational – or applied learning – qualifications which help pupils acquire knowledge, skills and understanding through practical, work-related activities in a real-life context so that they can apply what they've learned. Each programme of study covers a number of units, for which pupils must present evidence based on their work and studies to demonstrate the knowledge and skills they've developed on the course.

BTECs embody a fundamentally learner-centred approach to the curriculum, with a flexible, unit-based structure. Some units are externally assessed through an exam while others are internally assessed by your teachers. BTECs have been developed in conjunction with employers, universities, further education colleges and schools to ensure that they equip pupils with the high standards of knowledge, practical skills and understanding required for further study and employment.

The following BTECs are available at RBAI:

- BTEC Engineering – Extended Certificate
- BTEC IT – Extended Certificate
- BTEC Sport – Diploma

Universities recognise BTECs as being equivalent to A Levels, as shown in the tables below.

Table 1 - BTEC Extended Certificate (equivalent to 1 A Level)

BTEC grade	A Level grade	UCAS points
D*	A*	56
D	A	48
M	C	32
P	E	16

Table 2 - BTEC Diploma (equivalent to 2 A Levels)

BTEC Grade	A Level Grade	UCAS points
D* D*	A* A*	112
D* D	A* A	104
D D	A A	96
D M	B B	80
M M	C C	64
M P	D D	48
P P	E E	32

D – Distinction
M – Merit
P - Pass

BTEC Extended Certificate in Engineering

This qualification is equivalent in size to one A Level and will be offered in collaboration with Belfast Metropolitan College (Millfield Campus). It is a two-year programme which can be taken in conjunction with A Level subjects or other BTEC courses. The qualification is designed for pupils who are interested in a career in the engineering sector and want to progress to further study in this field. Learners will take a practical, applied engineering course as part of their study programme, which gives them an introduction to the sector.

Engineering covers a broad variety of roles and it involves the application of scientific principles and practical knowledge to transform ideas and materials into products and systems safely and support them during their lifetime. This qualification has a focus on a broad range of engineering specialist areas which will help to address the continuing skills gap that is faced by the sector. It has been developed in consultation with academics to ensure that it supports progression to higher education. In addition, employers and professional bodies have been involved and consulted in order to confirm that the content is appropriate and consistent with current practice for learners planning to enter employment directly in the engineering sector. The qualification consists of material which is both internally (33%) and externally (67%) assessed. The external assessment consists of a written exam component and coursework submission which are both marked by Pearson. The internal assessment consists of coursework submissions completed throughout the year and marked by Belfast Met tutors.
The content of this qualification is shown in the table below.

Pearson BTEC Level 3 National Extended Certificate in Engineering				
Unit number	**Unit title**	**GLH**	**Type**	**How assessed**
	Mandatory units – learners complete and achieve all units			
1	Engineering Principles	**120**	**Mandatory**	External
2	Delivery of Engineering Processes Safely as a Team	**60**	**Mandatory**	Internal
3	Engineering Product Design and Manufacture	**120**	**Mandatory and Synoptic**	External
	Optional units – learners complete 1 unit			
9	Work Experience in the Engineering Sector	**60**	**Optional**	Internal
10	Computer Aided Design in Engineering	**60**	**Optional**	Internal
11	Engineering Maintenance and Condition Monitoring Techniques	**60**	**Optional**	Internal
12	Pneumatic and Hydraulic Systems	**60**	**Optional**	Internal
19	Electronic Devices and Circuits	**60**	**Optional**	Internal
25	Mechanical Behaviour of Metallic Materials	**60**	**Optional**	Internal
30	Mechanical Measurement and Inspection Technology	**60**	**Optional**	Internal
35	Computer Programming	**60**	**Optional**	Internal
41	Manufacturing Secondary Machining Processes	**60**	**Optional**	Internal
44	Fabrication Manufacturing Processes	**60**	**Optional**	Internal
45	Additive Manufacturing Processes	**60**	**Optional**	Internal

More details on each of the individual units can be found by following the link below:

https://qualifications.pearson.com/content/dam/pdf/BTEC-Nationals/Engineering/2016/specification-and-sample-assessments/SPEC-BTEC-NAT-ENG-ExtCert.pdf

BTEC Extended Certificate in IT

This qualification is equivalent in size to one A Level. It is a two-year programme which can be taken in conjunction with A Level subjects or other BTEC courses. The qualification is aimed at learners looking to progress to employment in the IT / ICT sector or related fields of employment.

This qualification is designed for learners who are interested in an introduction to the study of creating IT systems to manage and share information, with a view to progressing to a wide range of higher education courses, not necessarily in IT. The Extended Certificate meets entry requirements in its own right for many university courses in IT/Computing, but can also be studied as a more general qualification to open up a range of other pathways in higher and further education e.g. Business Management. It can be studied alongside other BTEC courses, complementary A Level subjects or those subjects where the link with IT is not necessarily strong.

The Pearson BTEC Level 3 Extended Certificate in IT has 360 guided learning hours (GLH). The qualification consists of four units of which three are mandatory units and 2 are externally assessed.

Mandatory Units

- Information Technology Systems *(Externally Assessed)*
- Creating Systems to Manage Information *(Externally Assessed)*
- Using Social Media in Business

Optional Units

- Programming
- Data Modelling
- Website Development
- Mobile Apps Development
- Computer Games Development
- IT Project Management
- Big Data and Business Analytics
- Cyber Security and Incident Management
- IT Technical Support and Management
- Software Testing
- IT Service Delivery
- Customising and Integrating Applications
- Cloud Storage and Collaboration Tools
- Digital 2D and 3D Graphics
- Digital Animation and Effects
- The Internet of Things
- Enterprise in IT
- Business Process Modelling Tools

There will be a mix of internally assessed and externally assessed units so there will be some formal examinations. More details on each of the individual units can be found by following the link below:

https://qualifications.pearson.com/en/qualifications/btec-nationals/information-technology-2016.html

BTEC Diploma in Sport

This qualification is equivalent in size to two A Levels - it is a two-year programme which can be taken in conjunction with A Level subjects or other BTEC courses. The qualification is aimed at learners looking to progress to employment in sports performance or other related sectors. As well as supporting learners in progressing to a career in sports performance, it also opens up other related progression opportunities should learners not progress at an elite level. The boy's will study a total of 9 units of which 6 are mandatory and 3 are externally assessed.

Each external assessment is linked to a specific unit and allow learners to demonstrate breadth and depth of achievement. Each assessment is taken under specified conditions, then marked by Pearson and a grade awarded. Learners are permitted to re-sit external assessments during their programme and these assessments are available twice a year. The styles of external assessment used for qualifications in the Sport suite are:
• examinations – all learners take the same assessment at the same time, normally with a written outcome
• set tasks – learners take the assessment during a defined window and demonstrate understanding through completion of a vocational task.

Pearson BTEC Level 3 National Diploma in Sport				
Unit number	**Unit title**	**GLH**	**Type**	**How assessed**
	Mandatory units group A – learners complete and achieve all units			
1	Anatomy and Physiology	120	Mandatory	External
2	Fitness Training and Programming for Health, Sport and Well-being	120	Mandatory	External
22	Investigating Business in the Sport and Active Leisure Industry	90	Mandatory and Synoptic	External
23	Skill Acquisition in Sport	90	Mandatory	Internal
	Mandatory internal units group B – learners complete all units and achieve at least one			
3	Professional Development in the Sports Industry	60	Mandatory	Internal
4	Sports Leadership	60	Mandatory	Internal
	Optional units group C – learners complete 3 units			
5	Application of Fitness Testing	60	Optional	Internal
6	Sports Psychology	60	Optional	Internal
7	Practical Sports Performance	60	Optional	Internal
8	Coaching for Performance	60	Optional	Internal
9	Research Methods in Sport	60	Optional	Internal
10	Sports Event Organisation	60	Optional	Internal
11	Research Project in Sport	60	Optional	Internal
17	Sports Injury Management	60	Optional	Internal
18	Work Experience in Active Leisure	60	Optional	Internal
20	Leisure Management	60	Optional	Internal
21	Leisure Centre Operations	60	Optional	Internal
24	Sports Performance Analysis	60	Optional	Internal
25	Rules, Regulations and Officiating in Sport	60	Optional	Internal
26	Technical and Tactical Demands of Sport	60	Optional	Internal

Mandatory content (75%).
External assessment (45%).
More information on the qualification and each of the units can be accessed through the link below:
https://qualifications.pearson.com/en/qualifications/btec-nationals/sport-2016.html

Business Studies

This course follows the CCEA exam specification. Business Studies provides pupils with a unique insight into the world of work. Through its study, pupils discover how businesses operate and learn about their key elements and essential business functions. It offers an excellent foundation for those wishing to pursue careers in management, marketing, project management, business accounting, management consultancy, human resources, and business journalism as well as those interested in continuing on to further study.

The GCE Business Studies qualification is underpinned by three core business issues: globalisation, digital technology and stakeholder influence. It will require pupils to develop decision making skills and engage in critical thinking and analysis of core business functions, which will equip them for further study and employment in business-related areas.

Content Overview

In the AS units, pupils are introduced to the business world. They will develop an understanding of the importance of quality to businesses and gain an appreciation of growing a business through marketing activities and E-Business. They also learn about the importance of financial information and its use in decision making.

Pupils who continue to A2 will explore business planning and the need to manage risk when developing business strategies. They will develop an appreciation of the role of accounting and financial information in making strategic business decisions, and an understanding of the macroeconomic and global framework within which organisations operate. They will also develop an appreciation of the impact of ethics and sustainability on business decision making and organisational culture.

Assessment at each level is through external examination.

The specification aims to encourage pupils to:

- develop a lifelong interest in business;
- gain a holistic understanding of business and the international marketplace;
- develop a critical understanding of organisations and their relationship with key stakeholders;
- evaluate the role of technology in business communication, business operation and decision making;
- generate enterprising and creative solutions to business problems and issues;
- understand the ethical dilemmas and responsibilities faced by organisations and business decision makers;
- develop advanced study skills that help them prepare for third level education; and
- acquire a range of relevant business and generic skills including decision making, problem solving and interpretation of management information.

Entry Requirements

No prior attainment is required, although pupils would benefit from good standards of literacy and numeracy as quantitative skills in business and quality of written communication will both be assessed.

Pupils may choose Business Studies at A Level without having chosen it at GCSE. Those who have studied it at GCSE are strongly advised that a grade B or above is desirable.

Course Content

Unit AS 1: Introduction to Business

This unit introduces pupils to the business world. It begins, as many businesses do, with the entrepreneur and what motivates individuals to develop business enterprises. Pupils are expected to become familiar with different business ownership structures and the key stakeholder groups which may have an interest in how a business is managed. Pupils must acquire a critical understanding of the importance of quality and its significance in the competitive marketplace, including the production process, and the recruitment and training of a quality labour force. Pupils should appreciate the impact of management and leadership styles on employee motivation and business operations. Assessment for this unit consists of a written examination that includes both short and extended questions.

Unit AS 2: Growing the Business

Pupils will understand the role of technology in growing a business and how to assist with decision making. They must also understand the impact of competition on a business. Pupils also acquire a critical understanding of the marketing process, marketing strategy and the use of E-Business. Pupils will build an appreciation of the role of accounting and financial information in business decision making and financial control. Assessment for this unit consists of a written examination that includes both short and extended questions.

Unit A2 1: Strategic Decision Making

Pupils will be expected to identify business objectives and the potential for these to conflict with those of various stakeholder groups. Pupils will be able to analyse and evaluate stakeholder management strategies. Pupils will gain an insight into business planning and the need to manage risk and uncertainty when developing business strategies. They must also be able to analyse the importance of accounting and financial information in making strategic business decisions. Assessment for this unit consists of a written examination that includes both short and extended questions.

Unit A2 2: The Competitive Business Environment

This unit examines the macroeconomic framework within which businesses operate. Pupils are expected to evaluate the impact of globalisation on business activities. Pupils will develop an appreciation of the importance of ethics and sustainability on business decision making and culture. They will also evaluate the influence of stakeholders on business operations. The unit examines how businesses are affected by and react to change within the dynamic and technology-driven business environment. Assessment for this unit consists of an external examination. Pupils are required to produce a business report analysing problems, evaluating evidence and proposing/justifying solutions.

Assessment Summary

Content	Assessment	Weightings
AS 1: Introduction to Business	External written examination (1 ½ hours) 2 compulsory structured data responses (40 marks each)	50% of AS 20% of A Level
AS 2: Growing the Business	External written examination (1 ½ hours) 2 compulsory structured data responses (40 marks each)	50% of AS 20% of A Level
A2 1: Strategic Decision Making	External written examination (2 hours) 1 compulsory structured data response (90 marks)	30% of A Level
A2 2: The Competitive Business Environment	External written examination (2 hours) Pupils produce a business report analysing problems, evaluating evidence and proposing/justifying solutions (90 marks.)	30% of A Level

Chemistry

This course follows the CCEA exam specification (https://ccea.org.uk/post-16/gce/subjects/gce-chemistry-2016) and aims to stimulate interest and enjoyment of chemistry. It integrates theory and experimental work, developing investigative and manipulative skills. Studying A-level Chemistry will require you to utilise and develop a wide range of key skills such as problem solving, working with others, communication, numeracy, research and independent learning, practical application, and analytical thinking.
Chemistry is an essential A-level for a career in Medicine, Dentistry, Pharmacy, Chemical Engineering, and Veterinary Science. There is an enormous range of other careers also available through studying chemistry (https://edu.rsc.org/future-in-chemistry/career-options).

Unit	Content	Nature of Assessment	Tests Time
AS 1	Basic Concepts in Physical and Inorganic Chemistry	External / Written Test	1 hour 30 min.
AS 2	Further Physical and Inorganic Chemistry and an Introduction to Organic Chemistry	External / Written Test	1 hour 30 min.
AS 3	Basic Practical Chemistry	External / Written Test	1 hour 15 min.
AS 3	Basic Practical Chemistry	External / Written Test	1 hour 15 min.
A2 1	Further Physical and Organic Chemistry	External / Written Test	2 hours
A2 2	Analytical, Transition Metals, Electrochemistry and Organic Nitrogen Chemistry	External / Written Test	2 hours
AS 3	Further Practical Chemistry	External / Written Test	1 hour 15 min.
AS 3	Further Practical Chemistry	External / Written Test	1 hour 15 min.

Pupils choosing A Level Chemistry will need to have attained at least an A grade at GCSE level and have shown a proficient level of mathematical competency at GCSE.

Computer Science

This subject follows the **WJEC specification**. Computers are widely used in all aspects of business, industry, government, education, leisure, and the home. In this increasingly technological age, a study of computer science, and particularly how computers are used in the solution of a variety of problems, is not only valuable to the learners themselves but also essential to the future well-being of the country.

Why Study Computer Science?

Computer science integrates well with subjects across the curriculum. It demands both logical discipline and imaginative creativity in the selection and design of algorithms and the writing, testing and debugging of programs; it relies on an understanding of the rules of language at a fundamental level; it encourages an awareness of the management and organisation of computer systems; it extends the learners' horizons beyond the school or college environment in the appreciation of the effects of computer science on society and individuals. For these reasons, computer science is as relevant to a learner studying arts subjects as it is to one studying science subjects.

Studying for programming can lead to a possible career in: Software Development; Systems Analysis; Systems Architecture; Systems Development; Software Engineering; Artificial Programming; Data Science; Programming; Game Development and many other opportunities.

Entry Requirements

Pupils hoping to study this subject must have very good mathematical skills to be able to cope with programming and problem-solving challenges therefore a minimum of 16 points at GCSE (including a B grade in Mathematics and Digital Technology – Programming*) is essential for the study of this subject at A Level.
(* Pupils who have not previously studied GCSE Digital Technology but who have demonstrated strong mathematical ability with A* in GCSE Mathematics & A*/A in Further Mathematics will also be eligible.)

Subject Content

There are five assessment units, two at AS Level and three at A2:

AS Unit 1: Fundamentals of Computer Science – Written examination – 20% of qualification

AS Unit 2: Practical Programming – On-screen examination – 20% of qualification

This unit investigates computer architecture, communication, data representation, data structures, software applications, programs, algorithms, logic, programming methodologies and the impact of computer science on society. The onscreen exam consists of series of set tasks completed on-screen by the candidate. These tasks will assess the practical application of knowledge and understanding and will require the use of Python as a programming language.

A2 Unit 3: Programming and System Development - Written examination – 30% of qualification

A2 Unit 4: Computer Architecture, Data, Comms. & Applications - Written examination – 30% of qualification

This component investigates programs, data structures, algorithms, logic, programming methodologies and the impact of computer science on society. While the other focuses on computer, communication, data representation, organisation and structure of data, programs, algorithms, and software applications.

A2 Unit 5: Programmed Solution to a Problem - Non-exam assessment – 20% of qualification

This unit requires the learners to investigate, design, prototype, implement, test and evaluate a computer solution to a substantial problem of their own choice. The learner's chosen problem must provide sufficient scope for them to access the marks available for each section of the work. (Notionally this task will require 72 guided learning hours, which includes teaching time.)

Economics

This course follows the CCEA exam specification.

A minimum of 16 points at GCSE (including a B grade in English Language and Mathematics) is essential for the study of this subject at AS Level. Similarly, a pass grade at AS is essential for the study of the subject at A2 Level.

Economics is basically the study of how an economy works. It involves the application of the study of economic theory to real world situations and addresses some of the most pressing problems and issues that society faces today. Many problems discussed in the news everyday are economic problems, e.g. recession, government spending cuts, tuition fees, inflation, unemployment, exchange rates, the balance of payments, the Stock Market, etc. A study of economics helps to explain much of what is happening in the world around us.

Economics is a challenging subject that requires a positive approach and hard work both in school and at home. Pupils should appreciate that the AS and A2 GCE Economics courses require them to produce clear and coherent extended writing, to handle numerical data and to make calculations. Before taking these courses, pupils should ensure that they have adequate levels of proficiency in both English and Mathematics.

Economics opens up a wide range of opportunities for further and higher education and interesting and rewarding careers. It also combines well with other social sciences and the humanities, with foreign languages, with mathematics and sciences and with vocational subjects such as engineering, manufacturing and business. It is also very useful for those thinking of careers such as accountancy, business management, banking, finance, government services and professions such as teaching and law.

Pupils are required to study two units for the AS course (equivalent to 40% of A Level) and four units for the full A2 GCE course as follows: -

AS Units

- AS 1 Markets and Market Failure
- AS 2 Managing the National Economy

A2 Units

- A2 1 Business Economics
- A2 2 Managing the Economy in a Global World

AS units will be assessed using a number of short-answer questions, one data response question broken down into a number of parts and one extended open-response question from a choice of two.

A2 units will be assessed using a number of short-answer questions, one case study question broken down into a number of parts and one open-response question from a choice of two.

There is no coursework.

English Literature

This course follows the CCEA A-Level specification and aims to encourage pupils to:

- engage critically and creatively with a substantial body of texts and develop ways of responding to them;
- develop and apply effectively their knowledge of literary analysis and evaluation;
- explore the contexts of the texts they are reading and others' interpretations of them;
- deepen their understanding of the changing traditions of literature in English;
- carry out independent research and present personal responses in the form and language appropriate to literary study;
- develop advanced study skills that help them prepare for third-level education;
- demonstrate, through challenging internal and external assessments, that they understand and can apply key concepts; and
- nurture a lifelong interest in English Literature.

Specification Summary

Content	Assessment	Weightings
AS1: The Study of Poetry 1900-Present **Robert Frost and Seamus Heaney** Drama 1900-Present ***The Crucible*** **– Arthur Miller** **Or** ***A Streetcar Named Desire*** **– Tennessee Williams**	External written examination 2 hours Pupils answer two questions, one from Section A and one from Section B. Section A is open book Section B is closed book	60% of AS 24% of A-Level
AS2: The Study of Prose Pre 1900 ***Frankenstein*** **– Mary Shelley** **Or** ***Dracula*** **– Bram Stoker**	External Written examination 1 hour Pupils answer 1 question. Closed book	40% of AS 16% of A-Level
A2 1:	External written examination	20% of A-Level

Content	Assessment	Weightings
Shakespearean Genres ***The Tragedy of King Lear***	1 hour 30 mins Pupils answer one question. Closed book	
A2 2: The Study of Poetry Pre1900 and Unseen Poetry Poetry of John Donne or Geoffrey Chaucer as set text	External written examination 2 hours Pupils answer two questions, one from Section A and the question set in Section B	20% of A-Level
A2 3: Internal Assessment Theme based e.g: **Outsider e.g. *J D* Salinger's *The Catcher in the Rye and* Andrew Miller – *Pure* (2011)**	Internal assessment (coursework) Pupils complete a 2500-word comparison essay on a theme (two novels – one C21st novel and one pre C21st.	20% of A-Level

An A-Level in English Literature opens up many university course choices including: Law, Humanities, Media, Arts and Communications. Additionally, many pupils in areas such as Economics, Technology, Mathematics and Science subjects (STEM) find that they benefit immensely from having studied English Literature in that it broadens their academic base and range of reference, as well as helping to facilitate creative and critical analysis, research skills and language skills.

In recent years, pupils who studied A-Level English Literature have gone on to study a wide range of courses at university including: English, Law, Journalism, Psychology, Music, Education, Media Communications, Classics, Philosophy, Economics, Architectural Technology, Computing (Game Development), Business IT, Software Engineering, Quantity Surveying, Medicine, Pharmacy, Dentistry and Biomedical Sciences.

French

This course follows the CCEA exam specification. More than 220 million people on all five continents speak French. It's a major language of international communication. French is the second most widely learned language after English and the sixth most widely spoken language in the world. French is also the second most widely taught language, after English, and is taught on every continent.

The ability to speak French is an advantage when looking for a job. Many multinational companies use French as their working language in sectors such as retail, automotive, luxury goods and aeronautics. As the world's fifth biggest economy, France attracts entrepreneurs, researchers and foreign pupils. Learning a language and studying another culture broadens the mind and widens horizons.

We live in an interconnected world where international and cross-cultural working relationships are commonplace and a key aspect of the global workplace. Being able to speak another language, understand another culture and empathise with colleagues who are working in a second language are valuable skills for pupils with a range of future career plans.

This qualification is for pupils with a lively interest in language, who are interested in how other people think and live, and who want to be real global players in the twenty-first century.

Learning a language also gives pupils opportunities to develop confidence, independence, communication and presentation techniques, IT competence, as well as skills in research, evaluation and analysis that universities and employers value highly.

In the AS units, pupils engage with authentic online, audio-visual and printed materials to develop their language skills and their understanding of the countries and communities where the language is spoken. They explore two themes: Relationships, and Culture and Lifestyle. Pupils also explore a topic of personal interest and study a film or a literary text.

Pupils who continue to A2 develop their language and higher-level cognitive skills further through an individual research project, studying a literary text and engaging with authentic materials. They explore two themes: Young People in Society and Our Place in a Changing World.

There are six assessment units, three at AS Level and three at A2:

- Unit AS 1: Speaking;
- Unit AS 2: Section A – Listening, Section B – Reading and Section C – Use of Language;
- Unit AS 3: Extended Writing;

- Unit A2 1: Speaking;
- Unit A2 2: Section A – Listening and Section B – Reading; and
- Unit A2 3: Extended Writing.

This specification allows pupils to develop their language skills, knowledge and understanding of societal, political and cultural issues in French-speaking countries or communities.

It provides opportunities for pupils to engage in independent research into aspects of French society and culture that are of personal interest and to use multimedia to present their findings.

Assessment at A2 includes more varied question types, more demanding, evaluative tasks, extended writing and synoptic assessment that encourage pupils to develop their understanding of the subject as a whole. There is a varied choice of texts and it gives pupils a sound basis for progression to higher education through skills development.

Further Mathematics

The CCEA exam specification is followed for this subject.

Each year a class of the most talented and motivated mathematicians take A Level Mathematics in Year 13, and then study another A Level called Further Mathematics in Year 14. This course covers more advanced mathematics and involves studying Pure Mathematics and Applied Mathematics in much greater depth. Applied Mathematics is comprised of two strands, Mechanics and Statistics.

As for Mathematics, Further Mathematics has four modules.

	Further Mathematics	**Modules**	**Time**	**Weighting**
Year 14	Pure Mathematics	SFM1	1hr30min	50% of AS 20% of A2
	Applied Mathematics	SFM2	1hr30min	50% of AS 20% of A2
	Pure Mathematics	AFM1	2hrs15min	30% of A2
	Applied Mathematics	AFM2	2hrs15min	30% of A2

In both Applied Mathematics papers, students will only answer questions from their chosen sections.

Further Mathematics is particularly intended for those wishing to pursue Mathematics or a Mathematics related subject, such as science or engineering, at university. It is also recommended for those who are talented and simply find the subject interesting.

A very strong mathematical profile is required to take this subject to A Level. The Head of Mathematics will be able to determine your suitability for the course.

Geography

This course follows the CCEA exam specification.

Aims:

- To draw together different areas of knowledge, skills and understanding.
- Develop higher order thinking skills e.g. independent learning, creative thinking and problem solving.
- Apply their knowledge to real world situations.
- Carry out research.
- Provide extended responses and evidence of quality written communication.
- Demonstrate through challenging external assessments, that they understand and can apply key concepts.

Features of the specification:

- It includes 6 externally assessed units.
- Assessment at A2 includes more question types, more demanding evaluation tasks, extended writing, and synoptic assessment that encourage pupils to develop their understanding of the subject.
- It gives the pupils a sound basis for progression to higher education.

Skills and Techniques:

Pupils will develop the following data collection skills:

- Observe and collect primary data through fieldwork.
- Carry out sampling methods on this data: random, systematic, stratified, and pragmatic.
- At A2 and AS pupils will analyse and interpret geographical information e.g. maps, photographs, satellite images.
- Pupils will develop data processing skills using things like GIS (Geographical Information Systems)
- Pupils will use methods of statistical analysis e.g. Spearman's Rank, mean, mode, median, Nearest Neighbour, and at A2 only: chi-squared and location quotient.

Assessment:

The AS examination is worth 40% and the A2 exam worth 60% of the overall grade.

AS: Three papers.

- Paper 1: Physical Geography - 1 hour 15 mins
- Paper 2: Human Geography - 1 hour 15 mins
- Paper 3: Fieldwork Skills and Techniques in Geography - 1 hour

A2: Three papers.

- Paper 1: Physical Process, Landforms and Management - 1 hour 30 mins
- Paper 2: Processes and Issues in Human Geography - 1 hour 30 mins
- Paper 3: Decision Making in Geography - 1 hour 30 mins

German

This course follows the CCEA exam specification. Germany is an important economy in Europe and worldwide. German is the second most commonly used scientific language and is therefore a useful language for anyone wanting a career in business, science or hospitality. Increasingly employers recognise and value the transferable skills developed in language-learning: the attention to detail; oral and written communication and the ability to work in a global economy.

There are six assessment units, three at AS Level and three at A2:

- **Unit AS 1: Speaking**
  3-minute presentation on a topic of your choice that relates to a German-speaking country.
  8 -minute conversation on topics such as family; free time and holidays.
- **Unit AS 2**
  Section A – Listening 40 minutes
  The Listening examination contains two discrete audio passages on two topics. Each recording lasts approximately two minutes and students have full control over the recording and playback facility.
  Section B – Reading and Section C – Use of Language 1 hour 20 minutes
  In Section B Question 1 pupils read a German passage and respond in German to questions in German.
  In Section B Question 2 pupils translate a short passage (130 words approx.) from German into English.
  In Section C pupils are tested on the fine detail of German grammar such tense; case; pronouns and conjunctions.
- **Unit AS 3: Extended Writing; 1 hour**
  Pupils write one essay in German on the film, *Good Bye Lenin!* by Wolfgang Becker.

- **Unit A2 1: Speaking**:
  6-minute discussion on a topic of your choice (a historical period from the 20th Century of a German-speaking country or a region of a German-speaking country or community).
  9-minute conversation on topics such as immigration; the environment and poverty.
- **Unit A2 2: Section A – Listening 45 minutes**
  Same format as AS level, but on topics such as the environment, immigration and poverty.
  Unit 2: Section B – Reading 2 hours
  Question 1: gap-filling exercise in German.
  Question 2: set of questions that students respond to in German.
  Question 3: German passage that pupils summarise in English using approximately 100 words.
  Question 4: prose translation of approximately 130 words from English into German.
- **Unit A2 3: Extended Writing- 1 hour**
  Pupils write one essay in German on the play, *Der Besuch der alten Dame* by Friedrich Dürrenmatt.

Government & Politics

This course follows the CCEA exam specification.

Studying Government and Politics helps to create a critical awareness of the factors that affect political decisions. As a subject it is ideally suited to those who are interested in finding out why governments do what they do – and whether what they did was right.

Government and Politics will appeal to those who aspire to think critically and argue coherently and who want to develop excellent communication skills.

Government and Politics encourages young people to become actively involved as citizens. The skills that it promotes are directly relevant to many vocational areas and are valued by employers. The subject also prepares young people for a wide variety of higher education courses, not only Government and Politics.

The two AS modules in the Lower Sixth year are:

Module AS 1: The Government and Politics of Northern Ireland. (Contributes 16% of the final grade at A2 Level)

Module AS 2: The British Political Process (Contributes 24% of the final grade at A2 Level)

The two A2 modules in the Upper Sixth year are:

Module A2 1: A comparative study of the Government and Politics of the United Kingdom and the United States of America. (Contributes 35% of the final grade at A2 Level)

Module A2 2: Political Power.
This module focuses on the nature of competing theories of political power and how power works in authoritarian states such as Iran and North Korea. (Contributes 25% of the final grade at A2 Level)

This subject is assessed by external examination only. There is no coursework. Examination papers vary in length and consist of short and longer questions.

History

This course follows the CCEA exam specification.

The History Department at RBAI offers a pupil at AS and A2 Level the opportunity to study a number of modules that are designed to build on knowledge previously gained within the Department and further develop the interest the pupil has in the study of History.

History tells us how the world became what it is today. As well as being an enjoyable and stimulating subject in its own right, studying History gives a far better understanding of the present. History helps us to avoid the mistakes of the past.

History appeals to pupils who are interested in exploring the different reasons why particular events and phenomena take place. It will appeal to you if you are interested in exploring the motives that determine the actions of political decision-makers, as well as the consequences of these actions and how they combine with other influences to shape the future

Studying History helps to equip pupils with many of the skills needed in further and higher education and the workplace. It develops thinking and writing skills, teaching pupils to construct clear, logical, concise and convincing arguments. It develops the ability to undertake independent research and promotes analytical and problem-solving skills, as well as verbal and written communication skills.

Pupils at **AS Level** will cover the following modules:

- Germany 1919 - 1945 (contributes 20% of the final A2 grade)
- Russia 1914 - 1941 (contributes 20% of the final A2 grade)

Pupils at **A2 Level** will cover the following modules:

- The Clash of Ideologies: Russian Foreign Policy in the Twentieth Century (contributes 20% of the final A2 grade.)
- The Partition of Ireland 1900-1923 (contributes 40% of the final A2 grade)

Assessment procedures

This subject is assessed by external examination only. There is no coursework.

In each of the four units, pupils take a written examination.

Essay writing skills will be addressed during the teaching of the modules as will the skills required for successful source work.

Latin

The OCR exam specification is followed for this subject.

This is a linear A Level, there is no exam at AS level. Instead, all four papers are taken at the end of the Upper Sixth year. Those who intend to take the subject as a 'stand-alone' AS, complete two papers at the end of Lower Sixth (one Language and one Literature, covering just two set texts).

The AS/A2 Latin course builds upon GCSE to extend the range of reading. At AS Level, students engage with two extracts of ancient literature, one prose and one verse. There is a list of prescribed vocabulary, building upon words already learnt at GCSE as well as new vocabulary for the AS year. Progressing to A2 Level, students continue their exploration of the same books, unlocking deeper layers of meaning and mastery and are expected to have a wider range of vocabulary outside the AS prescribed vocabulary list.

There is no coursework, and no compulsory translation from English into Latin, and the four units examined determine 100% of the marks.

The 2 **AS** papers consist of:
Language - two prose unseen translations (one hour 30 minutes)

Literature - comprehension questions and a short essay on one prose and one verse set book (two hours)

A vocabulary list is set by OCR; all other words will be given on exam papers.

The 4 **A Level** papers consist of:
Unseen Translation – one prose and one verse unseen translation into English; two lines of the verse unseen will be set for scansion (1 hour 45 minutes)

Prose Composition or Comprehension -
No vocabulary is prescribed, but candidates are expected to acquire an appropriate additional vocabulary.

Prose Literature – students answer questions on the prose set text which we study in detail over two years (2 hours)

Verse Literature – students answer questions on the poetry set text which we study over two years (2 hours)

The set texts prescribed for A level in 2026 are:
Tacitus *Annals XII-XIV*: Extracts from the reigns of Nero and dramatic retellings of the murders of Claudius and Agrippina.
Vergil *Aeneid II*: The Fall of Troy as told by Aeneas to Queen Dido

A good pass at either AS or A2 Level will provide convincing confirmation of analytical ability and intellectual strength; the subject is specifically valuable for Languages, Law, Medicine, History, Archaeology etc., but is of far greater significance as an acknowledged and accepted indicator of mental flexibility and academic prowess. Latin has been identified by leading universities as being particularly testing and academically significant. While obviously being appropriate with the other humanities, Latin is widely seen as a very useful complement to scientific or mathematical subjects at A Level.

N.B. Latin will require a minimum of 2 pupils to proceed.

Life & Health Sciences

The CCEA GCE Life and Health Sciences specification was developed with industry in response to the needs of the growing life and health sciences sector in Northern Ireland.

Life and Health Science related industries make up over 25% of Northern Ireland's total economic output and include a diverse range of public and private businesses and employment opportunities, including pharmaceutical, chemical, agricultural, dental, nursing, environmental and allied health professions.

We will offer the Single Award qualification. Students take the AS units (40%) plus the A2 units (60%) for a full GCE A level qualification. They can also choose to take the AS course as a stand-alone qualification.

For a full **GCE Single Award** qualification students must complete **six** units: three at AS level and three at A2.

Unit	Content	Type of Assessment	Weighting	Time
AS 1	Experimental Techniques	Internal Assessment (12 Investigation reports)	33.34% of AS 13.34% of A-level	Throughout the course
AS 2	Human Body Systems	External / Written Test	33.33% of AS 13.33% of A-level	1 hour 30 min.
AS 3	Aspects of Physical Chemistry in Industrial Processes	External / Written Test	33.33% of AS 13.33% of A-level	1 hour 30 min.
A2 1	Scientific Method, Investigation, Analysis and Evaluation	Internal Assessment (Portfolio of Evidence of a full Scientific Investigation)	20% of A-level	Throughout the course
A2 2	Organic Chemistry	External / Written Test	20% of A-level	1 hour 45 min
A2 3 or A2 4 or A2 5	To be decided	External / Written Test	20% of A-level	1 hour 45 min

Internal Assessment

Unit AS 1: Experimental Techniques

In this unit students develop skills in performing a range of experimental techniques useful in Biology, Chemistry and Physics. They complete 12 extensive investigations and must present each one as a detailed report that includes a title, objective, introduction, materials and apparatus, risk assessment, procedure, results and conclusion. **Each report should be 1000 words**.

Unit A2 1: Scientific Method, Investigation, Analysis and Evaluation

Students submit a scientific investigation that includes three tasks:

- **Task 1: Essay** involves writing a word-processed Harvard-referenced literature review on their chosen scientific investigation (with a maximum of 10 references from a variety of sources).
- **Task 2: Plans and Lab Book** includes:
  - producing a draft project plan (on a spreadsheet) using investigation design principles, with a written summary of its production;
  - recording a trial of the experimental work in their lab book;
  - refining the method, approach to health and safety, quality protocol, data analysis techniques and/or any other relevant aspect of the study;
  - producing an updated project plan for the scientific investigation, incorporating changes arising from the trial study; and
  - recording the experimental work in their lab book.
- **Task 3: Report: Investigation, Analysis and Evaluation** must include:
  - title;
  - aim/hypothesis;
  - materials and apparatus;
  - risk assessment;
  - method;
  - results;
  - conclusion and evaluation;
  - references; and
  - appendix.

The essay should be **1500 words** and the report **1500-2500 words**

Further information (including the specification) can be found on the Life & Health Sciences microsite on the CCEA website using the following link:

https://ccea.org.uk/post-16/gce/subjects/gce-life-and-health-sciences-2016/support

Indicative University Entry (April 2021) can found on the microsite or by using the following link:

https://ccea.org.uk/post-16/gce/subjects/gce-life-and-health-sciences-2016/support

(Note: Entry criteria for individual courses can change and should always be checked with the relevant institution)

This A-level is a viable option for pupils who have an interest in science but where the science A-levels (Biology, Chemistry & Physics) are not the most appropriate pathway for them. *Pupils choosing A-Level Life &*

Health Sciences will need to have attained a ***minimum of grade B in <u>both</u> GCSE Biology and Chemistry, or A* in GCSE Single Award Science****.*

Mathematics

The CCEA exam specification is followed for this subject.

Entry into the study of Mathematics in the Sixth Form will be dependent on pupil performance in GCSE Mathematics and Further Mathematics. The content of GCSE Mathematics is required when answering A Level questions and the examining board will assume that all pupils know this material. Therefore, any pupil who wishes to study Mathematics in Year 13 must sit the full course, i.e. M4 and M8, and achieve at least an A grade at GCSE. Due to the overlap between GCSE Further Mathematics and AS Level Mathematics those pupils who sit GCSE Further Mathematics must achieve at least a B grade. It remains a popular choice in the Sixth Form and as a consequence, if the demand is too great, an upper limit on numbers may have to be introduced based on Year 12 examination performance.

Any pupils considering this option should enjoy problem-solving, the challenge of the precision of language which Mathematics requires and be prepared to work independently.

The structure of the course is modular and involves study in two areas, Pure Mathematics and Applied Mathematics. Applied Mathematics is comprised of two strands, Mechanics and Statistics. It is a rigorous programme requiring both ability and commitment. There is no coursework element in Mathematics at A Level but pupils will sit a total of four written papers. Two are taken in Year 13 and two in Year 14 as follows:

	Modules		**Time**	**Weighting**
Year 13	Pure Mathematics	SMT1	1hr45min	60% of AS 24% of A2
	Applied Mathematics	SMT2	1hr15min	40% of AS 16% of A2
Year 14	Pure Mathematics	AMT1	2hrs30min	36% of A2
	Applied Mathematics	AMT2	1hr30min	24% of A2

Mathematics opens many more opportunities to careers than it closes. It is accepted as an entry qualification for both medicine and law, and for those subjects where it has more obvious relevance such as Mathematics and its many branches including Science, Engineering, Computing, Accountancy and Business. In the world of commerce those with a mathematical background can be found anywhere from schools and universities to the Civil Service, telecommunications, manufacturing, service industries, computing and the business and financial sectors.

Pupils choosing A Level Mathematics will need to have attained at least a B in GCSE Further Mathematics. If they have not studied GCSE Further Mathematics, then a minimum of an A grade is required at GCSE level in order to continue with the subject at A Level.

Media Studies

WJEC is the exam specification which is followed for this subject.

A Level Media Studies aims to develop pupils' critical understanding of the media through engagement with media products and concepts and through the creative application of production skills. The course is designed to allow pupils to draw on their existing experience of the media and to develop their abilities to respond critically to the media.

The subject enables pupils to explore a wide variety of media, including digital media technologies, drawing on the fundamental concepts informing the study of the media: texts, industry and audiences. Media Studies also encourages creative work to enable pupils to gain a greater appreciation of the media through their own production work and to develop their own production skills. At A2 in particular, pupils are given the opportunity to research a topic which will then form the basis for their production, thus encouraging them to create productions informed by an awareness of contemporary media issues.

Media Studies develops transferable analytical, research and production skills and equips pupils for a wide range of careers in Creative industries such as advertising, journalism, graphic design, film, television and radio production, marketing and promotion.

The A Level course consists of two units at AS Level:-

- Unit 1 Investigating the Media (contributes 24% of the final grade at A2 Level).
- Unit 2 Creating a Media Production (contributes 16% of the final grade at A2 Level).

There are two units at A2 Level:-

- Unit 3 Media in the Global Age (contributes 36% of the final grade at A2 Level).
- Unit 4 Creating a Cross-Media Production (contributes 24% of the final grade at A2 Level).

One unit each year focuses on developing analytical approaches to media texts and the other on developing pupils' research, creative and technical skills via a practical production portfolio. At A2 Level, pupils study three key industries in depth and develop a cross-media practical production.

Music

The CCEA exam specification is followed for this subject.

AS Level

AS 1: Performing (32.5% of AS, 13% of A Level)

- Solo performance
- Viva voce

AS 2: Composing (32.5% of AS, 13% of A Level)

- A: Composition task, **or** B: Composition with technology task
- Written commentary

AS 3: Responding to Music (35% 0f AS, 14% of A Level)

Two external written examinations:
- Test of aural perception (1 hour)
- Written examination (2 hours)

A2 Level

A2 1: Performing (19.5% of A Level)

- Solo performance
- Viva voce

A2 2: Composing (19.5% of A Level)

- A: Composition task, or B: Composition with technology task
- Written commentary

A2 3: Responding to Music (21% of A Level)

Two external written examinations:
- Test of aural perception (1hour 15 mins)
- Written examination (2 hours)

An A Level in Music is necessary for entrance into a degree course in Music. Possible careers range from specifically musical areas (such as performing, conducting, composing, arranging, teaching, publishing, recording, sound engineering, music therapy) to non-musical careers for which a degree in Music can be used as a general qualification.

An A Level in Music, combined with two other subjects, can form part of the entrance qualifications for a variety of non-musical degree courses such as Law or Computer Science.

Physics

The CCEA exam specification is followed for this subject and aims to develop pupil interest in and enthusiasm for Physics, including developing an interest in further study and careers in the subject. As well as stimulating an interest in Physics and its applications, the specification highlights that the subject is a coherent and developing framework of knowledge based on fundamental theories of the structure and processes of the physical world.

Careers will generally be in the fields of physics, mathematics and engineering, but will also be useful for potential pilots, optometrists, systems analysts, computer programmers and so on. Pupils choosing A Level Physics will need to have attained at least an A grade at GCSE level.

Content	Assessment	Weightings
AS 1: Forces, Energy and Electricity	**1 hour 45 mins** **Externally assessed written paper**	40% of AS 16% of A Level
AS 2: Waves, Photons and Astronomy	**1 hour 45 mins** **Externally assessed written paper**	40% of AS 16% of A Level
AS 3: Practical Techniques and Data Analysis	**2 (1 hour) subcomponents** An externally assessed test of practical skills, consisting of short tasks (40 marks) and a separate paper requiring the analysis of experimental results (50 marks). **Externally assessed**	20% of AS 8% of A Level
A2 1: Deformation of Solids, Thermal Physics, Circular Motion, Oscillations and Atomic and Nuclear Physics	**2 hour written paper** **Externally assessed**	24% of A Level
A2 2: Fields, Capacitors and Particle Physics	**2 hour written paper** **Externally assessed**	24% of A Level
A2 3: Practical Techniques and Data Analysis	**2 (1 hour) subcomponents** An externally assessed test of practical skills, consisting of **two** experimental tests (40 marks) and a separate paper requiring the analysis of experimental results (50 marks). **Externally assessed**	12% of A Level

Religious Studies (Philosophy & Ethics)

The study of religion and the philosophical and ethical questions that follow contributes to pupils' understanding of the foundations of Western culture. It provides an opportunity to reflect upon their own attitudes, the attitudes of others and the fundamental questions of what it means to be human. It is multi-disciplinary, encompassing literature, history, philosophy, psychology, sociology, linguistics, art, medicine, law and more. It also instils the analytic and critical skills needed for further academic study in the field of humanities and in many professional occupations.

A GCSE in Religious Studies is helpful but not essential for the study of the subject at AS Level. As long as pupils gain good grades in other humanities subjects (English and History for example), they are eligible to choose Religious Studies at A level.

The A Level comprises AS and A2. The AS can be taken as a "stand-alone" qualification without progression to A2. The A2 will include synoptic assessment included in the paper on each module.

AS

- Ethics: Foundations, Principles and Practice
- An Introduction to the Philosophy of Religion

A2

- Ethics and society
- Religious Belief and Competing Claims

An A* will be awarded to the candidates who attain an overall Grade A in the qualification and an aggregate of at least 90% of the uniform marks across the A2 units.

Each AS unit will be assessed by answering two questions in a 1 ½ hour paper.

Each A2 unit will be assessed by answering three questions in a 2 hour paper.

Spanish

The CCEA exam specification is followed for this subject. An estimated 426 million people speak Spanish as their first language. Thirty-five million of these speakers live in the United States of America. The Spanish speaking population is rapidly increasing, so demand for competent speakers in a variety of roles has escalated. The ability to travel further afield has opened up the Hispanic world to a greater volume of people who are now appreciating Hispanic culture. More and more people are exploring Latin America and the less well-known parts of Spain. The rise of Hispanic economies has also led to increased demand for speakers of Spanish in the business sectors.

We live in an interconnected world where international and cross-cultural working relationships are commonplace and a key aspect of the global workplace. Being able to speak another language, understand another culture and empathise with colleagues who are working in a second language will be valuable for pupils with a range of future career plans.

This qualification is for pupils with a lively interest in language, who are interested in how other people think and live, and who want to be real global players in the twenty-first century.

Learning a language also gives pupils opportunities to develop confidence, independence, communication and presentation techniques, IT competence, as well as skills in research, evaluation and analysis that universities and employers value highly.

In the AS units, pupils engage with authentic online, audio-visual and printed materials to develop their language skills and their understanding of the countries and communities where the language is spoken. They explore two themes: Relationships, and Culture and Lifestyle. Pupils also explore a topic of personal interest and study a film or a literary text. Pupils who continue to A2 develop their language and higher-level cognitive skills further through an individual research project, the study of a literary text and engaging with authentic multimedia materials. They explore two themes: Young People in Society and Our Place in a Changing World.

There are six assessment units, three at AS Level and three at A2:

- Unit AS 1: Speaking;
- Unit AS 2: Section A – Listening, Section B – Reading and Section C – Use of Language;
- Unit AS 3: Extended Writing;

- Unit A2 1: Speaking;
- Unit A2 2: Section A – Listening and Section B – Reading; and
- Unit A2 3: Extended Writing.

This specification allows pupils to develop their language skills, knowledge and understanding of societal, political and cultural issues in Spanish-speaking countries or communities. It provides opportunities for pupils to engage in independent research into aspects of Spanish society and culture that are of personal interest and to use multimedia to present their findings.

Assessment at A2 includes more varied question types, more demanding, evaluative tasks, extended writing and synoptic assessment that encourage pupils to develop their understanding of the subject as a whole. There is a varied choice of texts and it gives pupils a sound basis for progression to higher education through skills development.

Sports Science and the Active Leisure Industry

This is a two year academic course which follows the CCEA specification. The main components of the course are:

Unit AS 1 develops pupils' knowledge, understanding and skills involved in fitness and training. They administer a range of fitness tests and analyse the results. They devise a training programme and lead the sessions. This unit is internally assessed through a portfolio and is worth 60% of the AS grade and 30% of the total A2

Unit AS 2 introduces pupils to key concepts in health, fitness and lifestyle and explores the relationships between them. They study nutrition for health and exercise as well as components of fitness. They also analyse the health of the nation compared with other European countries. This unit is assessed by a written examination of short and extended questions and stimulus response questions. This section is worth 40% of the AS grade and 20% of the total A2.

Unit A2 1 is designed to develop pupils' higher level skills through greater depth, complexity, and application of knowledge and understanding. It is internally assessed and externally moderated through an internal assessment portfolio. This unit provides pupils with the opportunity to organise and run an active leisure event. A2 1 helps pupils to prepare for employment in this industry by giving them the opportunity to develop essential workplace business skills. This unit is internally assessed through a portfolio and is worth 30% of the total A2 grade.

Unit A2 2 concentrates on examining the structure of the respiratory, circulatory, muscular and skeletal systems. Pupils learn about how these systems function during and after exercise, and at rest. They develop a knowledge and understanding of the structural apparatus of each system and discuss the functions. Pupils study how the acquisition of skills and the principles of learning are relevant to skilled performance. This unit is assessed by a synoptic written examination consisting of short and extended questions and stimulus response questions. This section is worth 20% of the total A2.

Technology & Design

The Eduqas GCE A Level course specification is followed for Years 13 and 14 Technology.

Pupils must complete two units spread over two years and the option studied in RBAI is Product Design. The two components are listed below, and both are compulsory:

Component 1: Design and Technology in the 21st Century
Written examination: 3 hours
50% of qualification

Learners take a single examination in one of the following endorsed areas:

- fashion and textiles
- product design.

The examination includes a mix of structured and extended writing questions assessing learners' knowledge and understanding of:

- technical principles
- designing and making principles

along with their ability to:

analyse and evaluate wider issues in design and technology.

Component 2: Design and make project
Non-exam assessment: approximately 80 hours
50% of qualification

A sustained design and make project, based on a brief developed by the candidate, assessing the candidate's ability to:

- identify, investigate and outline design possibilities
- design and make prototypes
- analyse and evaluate design decisions and outcomes, including for prototypes made by themselves and others

The design and make project will be based within the same endorsed area as the written examination.

1	**Designing and innovation**
(a)	Principles of designing
(b)	Research techniques
(c)	Analysis of the problem
(d)	Problem solving strategies
(e)	Quantitative and qualitative testing
(f)	Ergonomics and anthropometrics
(g)	Computer systems for designing
(h)	Innovation
(i)	Consider issues when designing
(j)	Research, plan and evaluate
(k)	Generate and develop ideas
(l)	Develop proposals
(m)	Detail design
(n)	Communicate ideas & information
2	**Materials and components**
(a)	Materials and their application
(b)	Working characteristics of materials
(c)	Materials with specific properties
(d)	Modern material technology
(e)	Materials for specific requirements
(f)	Choice of finishes
(g)	Components and their application
(h)	Safe working practices
(i)	Work with materials & components
3	**Processes**
(a)	Hand methods
(b)	Machine methods
(c)	Combining/forming materials
(d)	Computer-aided manufacture
(e)	Work with tools and equipment
(f)	Work with materials, components

4	**Industrial & commercial practice**
(a)	Manufacturing industry
(b)	Manufacturing systems
(c)	Stages of production
(d)	Detailed manufacturing methods
(e)	Management systems
(f)	Safe working practices
(g)	Industrial methodology
5	**Product analysis and systems**
(a)	Design and production
(b)	Form and function
(c)	Trends & influences on design
(d)	Intellectual Property & Standards
(e)	Systems and sub-systems
(f)	Control systems
(g)	The use of ICT
(h)	Issues when designing
(i)	Systems analysis
(j)	ICT when planning
(k)	ICT when designing and making
6	**Human responsibility**
(a)	Service to the customer
(b)	Regulatory frameworks
(c)	Risk assessment procedures
(d)	Values in design solutions
(e)	Forms of energy
(f)	Responsibilities when designing
(g)	Quality (of the product)
(h)	Quality (human processes)
7	**Public interaction**
(a)	Innovation in the market
(b)	Researching the market
(c)	Selling the product
(d)	Diffusion of products
(e)	Researching market/client needs
(f)	Determine product marketability
(g)	Evaluate products

Collaborative Courses

In the past, pupils have accessed a range of 'A' Levels at other schools.

Pupils wishing to study a collaborative course are normally only able to select the subject as a 4th AS Level. This is because there is no guarantee that the timetable will be aligned in the Upper Sixth year. Details of collaborative courses can be obtained from the Vice Principal, Mr J Allen.

Higher Education Information

Your sixth form subject choices will govern what your options are in post-18 education. This is also the case regarding your GCSE performance – all universities will require passes in English Language and Maths. Most will demand B or above for their most competitive courses. Universities in the Republic of Ireland (like Trinity College Dublin) will require a modern or classical language at GCSE too. Your overall profile at GCSE will have a profound impact upon your future choices (e.g. the average successful applicant for Oxbridge will possess 7-8 A* at GCSE). Ensure that you perform to the best of your ability! Universities will also demand certain subject combinations in order to study particular courses at university.

- Aspirant Medics/Dentists and Vets will usually be expected to take Biology and Chemistry at A Level. Those wishing to do these courses are advised not to do Further Mathematics as some universities will not classify Mathematics and Further Mathematics as two separate A Levels. Furthermore, universities will often demand that students do 3 separate A Levels in their A2 year (which is sometimes precluded by students completing Further Mathematics at A Level).
- Engineers will be expected to take Mathematics at A Level and some universities will demand Physics too.
- Those seeking to do Mathematics/Engineering/Actuary/Sciences at highly competitive universities (e.g. Oxford, Cambridge, Imperial, Durham) are strongly encouraged to consider Further Mathematics at A Level.
- Those seeking to do Physiotherapy may be expected to take Biology at A Level (although this does vary between institutions). Some Sports Science courses will also demand a 'Science' at A Level.
- Different universities will classify 'Science' in different ways – you must confirm applicable subjects via individual research.
- Some universities in the Republic of Ireland will not accept vocational qualifications such as BTECs and a small number of A Level subjects.

Most of our pupils complete 3 A Levels. This is because the vast majority of universities only stipulate the need for 3 A Level qualifications in their entry requirements. 3 excellent grades at A Level are far more preferable than 4 mediocre grades. There are some exceptions though:

- We advise all pupils who are considering applications for Oxford, Cambridge or Imperial to complete 4 subjects at AS Level.
- We advise aspirant Medics, Dentists and Vets to complete 4 subjects at AS Level.
- We advise pupils who are considering applications for universities such as Trinity College Dublin in the Republic to consider completing 4 subjects at AS Level (although the new CAO points equivalences have eased this pressure and there are special admissions schemes aimed at students from NI).

It is important to remember that BTECs are accepted by all universities in the UK for the vast majority of courses. BTECs have full equivalence with A Levels. Recent BTEC students have enrolled at universities such as Durham and Exeter for high value courses like Business Management. There is no discrimination against these subjects. BTECs will only not be valid if a university requires a specific subject combination (e.g. Biology and Chemistry for Medicine). It would also not be advisable for Oxford, Cambridge or Imperial.

It is important to complete individual research on what universities require in terms of GCSE, A Level or BTEC. For example, QUB will not accept two BTEC Extended Certificate subjects but will accept a BTEC Diploma. Most courses will accept multiple combinations of subjects. Your choices should primarily be governed by two simple principles – what do you enjoy and what are you good at? Sticking to those two precepts should ensure the best possible performance at A Level. Investigate additional requirements too e.g. Admissions tests, Vocational work experience, Voluntary work, Summer schools and Interviews.

All students must complete careful research around courses and institutions before they make their subject choices.

If you have any queries, contact Mr Leathley (Head of Higher Education) or Mr Douglas (Oxbridge adviser).