



A LEVEL COURSE GUIDE

Most students study four subjects in year 12 and continue with three of these to A level in Year 13. The fourth subject is studied to AS level.

A levels are two year linear courses and the grade achieved is entirely determined by exams taken at the end of the two year course.

Students will gain a stand-alone AS qualification in the subject they opt not to continue with into Year 13.

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Course Details

Below is a brief description of the courses on offer. Further details may be obtained from the relevant school department

ART AND DESIGN (Edexcel)

The syllabus encourages an enquiring approach to Art & Design. Successful candidates will be able to demonstrate an understanding of past and contemporary Art & Design practice and be able to produce artwork that embraces a range of ideas, techniques and materials. The key skill of communication is integral to the course but other appropriate key skills such as information technology; working with others; problem solving and improving one's own learning and performance will also be assessed. Visits to museums and galleries are regularly made, both as teacher-led activities and as self-directed outings in an individual's own time. Workshop opportunities at the major London

Galleries and Art colleges are also built into the course. During November, students collaborate to generate a visual response to the annual school Oratorio production which takes the form of an accompanying exhibition. It is expected that all students attend life-drawing classes as an integral part of the course. An exhibition of students' work will conclude the course.

The school follows the Edexcel specification, the new syllabus in 2015 will not change the content of the course but the marking system will alter slightly, which is still awaiting approval. The draft specification of AS is 8ADO and the draft specification of A-Level is 9ADO.

BIOLOGY (AQA)

The school follows the AQA specifications and students choose between the A level and AS level qualifications. The AS is taught in Year 12 and covers biological molecules, cells, exchange of substances, genetic information and variation. The A level contains the AS topics plus, energy transfer, the response of organisms to the environment, genetics, evolution, ecosystems and gene expression. Students following the A level course

will take part in a residential field course at the end of Year 12. Although the course is complete and worthwhile in itself it is also a suitable preparation for those intending to study Medicine, Veterinary Science or Dentistry and especially relevant to students wishing to pursue a degree course in one of the many Biological Sciences.

CHEMISTRY (AQA)

Chemistry is a very popular subject at Advanced Level. It requires a very good knowledge of the principles and facts covered at GCSE. Competence in Mathematics is an advantage for the A level course. Students are taught by two teachers, with emphasis being placed on making the subject interesting and approachable. There are double practical sessions each week, and formal assessment of practical work is made throughout the course. The AS course concentrates on a qualitative understanding of

the subject, whilst the A level Upper Sixth year builds on this in both breadth and depth, introducing a more mathematical approach to the subject. A Level Mathematics is not required, although a little extra learning may be needed by those without it. The course provides an ideal preparation for the many Chemistry and related courses at university including Medicine, Natural Sciences and Engineering

CLASSICS:

Latin (OCR) and Classical Greek (OCR)

Dead languages are very much alive at Tiffin and have a solid presence within the Sixth Form. Examination results are very good indeed and the Department is proud of the steady stream of students that go on to study Classical subjects at University level. Both Latin and Classical Greek offer students a chance to explore the language, literature and civilisation of the Ancient World in breadth and depth. The achievements of the Greeks and Romans have had an enormous influence on nearly every aspect of our own culture and students will find the study of Classical texts both provocative and challenging. Latin and Greek are certainly demanding A Level subjects, but ones which are endlessly rewarding. They can – and are

– studied in combination with just about every subject offered in the Sixth Form at Tiffin. They complement both Arts and Sciences. In the Sixth Form, students of Latin and/or Greek have the opportunity to study prose and verse literature in the original language, as well as building on linguistic skills acquired at GCSE. Small class sizes mean that students enjoy considerable support and individual attention, as well as tutorial style lessons. The courses are enhanced by a vibrant programme of extra-curricular activities including: visits to the theatre both in and outside London, visits to museum collections, lectures, and trips to classical sites abroad.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY – Product Design (Edexcel)

Good design is vital to our world and economy, and it is important, therefore that we enthuse students with a passion for designing their futures. Students following a course in AS and A level Design and Technology (Edexcel Product Design 8DT0, 9DT0) will further their appreciation of design, focusing to an extent on industrial techniques and practices. They will also develop their own design and technological capabilities through the designing and manufacture of high quality products. In addition they will analyse and, where appropriate, modify existing products and systems, and examine the implications of industrial production. The

main areas of study are Materials, processes and techniques, digital technologies, factors influencing the development of products, effects of technological products, industrial manufacture, and environmental issues. Alongside the theory element of the course equivalent time is allocated to allow students to be given the opportunity to apply the skills they have acquired and developed throughout the course to design and make a product of their own choice. The course weighting for both AS and A level is 50% coursework and 50% written paper.

AQA DRAMA AND THEATRE STUDIES

The A Level course is made up of three Components that assess students' practical skills, knowledge and understanding.

Component One: Explores the students' knowledge and understanding of theatre through the practical exploration of two set texts, which is assessed through an open book written examination and is worth 40% of the A level.

Component Two: Creating Original Drama focusses on the student developing a devised piece of theatre which is supported by a working notebook. The assessment is based on both process and performance and makes up 30% of the total A level. The component is internally assessed.

Component Three: Making Theatre asks the students to rehearse three extracts from 3 contrasting texts. Extract 3 is externally assessed and the students are required to complete a log book of the rehearsal process. The component is worth 30% of the A level.

The set texts studied are:

Jerusalem by Jez Butterworth and Our Country's Good by Timberlake Wertenbaker, although this could be subject to change.

Students taking the course are encouraged to get involved in the extracurricular programme of Drama offered at the school.

ECONOMICS (Edexcel)

Professor, European Programme Manager, Lawyer, Banking Consultant, Managing Director, Stockbroker, Headmaster, Software Functional Designer, Entrepreneur. Economics graduates are represented in a wide range of careers which reflect the depth and breadth of their skills. Studying A Level Economics will be the first step on that road. The A Level Economics course is intellectually robust and relevant. It will prepare you for further study and jobs that can be both financially and intellectually rewarding. The course covers a number of stimulating topics including development economics, game theory and business

strategy, fiscal policy and consumer behaviour. To succeed in economics you need three attributes: you need to be comfortable with numbers in order to handle the quantitative topics; you must be interested in keeping abreast of current economic and political developments and you must be able to articulate your ideas in well written English. Beyond the curriculum you will be encouraged to submit written pieces for the RES Young Economist Essay competition, take part in IFS Student Investor Challenge, organise guest speakers and, if selected, make up the team for the Bank of England Target 2.0 competition.

ENGLISH LITERATURE (OCR)

The study of English in the Sixth Form provides the opportunity to read widely in a range of literature from Shakespeare to contemporary writers. The emphasis is always on a personal response to language, and to ideas

relevant to our own lives. It is a course in which teacher and student are involved together in a cooperative exploration of literature, which is, ideally, a source of both pleasure and understanding.

GEOGRAPHY (AQA)

If you have a sense of discovery and enjoy studying a subject that is both relevant and engaging, then this is the course for you. Geography has long been the subject that bridges the divide between the arts and sciences, making it one of the most valued A Levels in university applications into any academic field. Challenging in its embrace of environment and current affairs, this experienced and successful department follows the AQA syllabus investigating three units at AS (water and carbon cycles, contemporary urban environments, and changing places) and the full A-Level goes into greater depth and sophistication through the study of coastal systems and landscapes, natural hazards, and global systems and governance. Field work and a range of

geographical skills, although examined separately, are delivered throughout the topics covered: rivers, floods and management, coastal environments, urban change etc. A week-long fieldtrip in Year 12 to South-West England based on Dartmoor and The Isle of Purbeck investigates drainage basins and the Jurassic Coast World Heritage environment. This is an integral part of the subject delivery, supporting learning, the costs of which are charged to participants. There are also trips to Paris and London to compare urban environments and changes. This exciting subject thrives on enthusiasm and a will to gain new knowledge through research and debate.

GOVERNMENT AND POLITICS (Edexcel)

The AS and A Level courses offered are designed primarily to introduce students to the principles and practice of the British political system. Emphasis is placed on the major issues and party political debates arising from the British system, with a comparison to other political systems. Students entering the course should have an interest in current political affairs, and be prepared to read a quality daily newspaper (Independent, Times, Guardian). The course is examined

in the form of short answers, essays and documentary analysis. We study the workings of democracy and political institutions in the AS (such as Parliament, the Prime Minister and Cabinet, the electoral system, devolution, political parties, the Judiciary etc); and key political issues affecting Britain in the A level (such as economic policy, Europe, law and order, race relations, welfare state, Northern Ireland etc).

HISTORY (OCR)

The A-Level History course will encourage you to develop your own judgement, critical awareness and powers of expression. A-Level History is also an opportunity to study different periods, areas and aspects of History which will be new to you. It is important that you have an enquiring mind, an interest in the past and a desire to communicate your ideas effectively. In Year 12 we study the Wars of the Roses and the reign of Henry VII.

We will also be investigating the French Revolution and the career of Napoleon Bonaparte. This is followed in Year 13 by a course on Russian history from 1855-1964, which compares the rule of Tsars with the Communist dictatorships of Lenin, Stalin and Khrushchev. Alongside this course students will be required to independently research and write a 3-4,000 word essay on an aspect of history.

MATHEMATICS (Edexcel)

Mathematics is a very popular choice at Tiffin. In an increasingly technological age, the skills and insights gained through a course in Mathematics are in demand by many employers, and Maths is also an entry requirement for a variety of Higher Education courses. In addition to rigorous preparation for A Level exams we strive to retain an excitement in the subject and offer opportunities for further involvement, for example through participation in the UK Maths Challenge at senior level, through an extended project or through the weekly Riemann Zeta club. We offer several Maths Courses:

Maths

For students starting teaching in September 2017 A Level in Maths will comprise 2 Core Maths papers and one applied maths paper covering both Mechanics and Statistics. The statistical content of the course supports the study of Geography, Biology and Economics among others. The mechanics content of the course is very beneficial in support of Physics and covers the building blocks required for the study of Engineering.

Maths and AS Further Maths

Further Maths AS level may be required or recommended for Maths, Engineering, Computer science, physics or economics courses at some top universities. Students will study for the full Maths A level and two further papers; one paper covers Pure Maths and the other paper either Mechanics or Statistics.

Maths and A level Further Maths

During your first year you will study A level Maths covering a full A level in a single year with about 30%

more teaching time than a single AS Level. In the second year students will study for four further papers: two in Pure Maths and a further two in either Mechanics, Statistics or Pure Maths. The A level Further Maths course is a high-level course, focusing on Pure Maths and Mechanics or Statistics. The course is very suitable for anyone considering reading Maths, Engineering or Physics at university, or indeed, anyone who relishes an intellectual challenge.

MODERN LANGUAGES:

French, German and Spanish (AQA)

Languages are exciting and increasingly important for career prospects. Linguistically, the course will deepen your understanding of the language and enhance your ability to use it effectively. Students learn about a wide variety of cultural, political, sociological and scientific issues, and all matters of contemporary interest in the target language. The study of literature is introduced at A2. As part of the course students are expected to read widely in the foreign language outside lessons, to listen regularly to the radio, to watch foreign language

programmes on the television and collect a dossier of material on each topic area. They will also of course be expected to spend time abroad in a country which speaks their language of study. They are encouraged to take part in one of the various visits to France/Germany/Spain, which are organised by the department, and to avail themselves of the opportunities offered by the various language associations and institutes in the London area.

MUSIC (AQA)

With several sixth-formers opting to study Music at University, this is an academic course which focuses upon developing techniques of harmony and counterpoint, and the set works taken from the AQA Areas of Study - The Western Classical Tradition, Choral Music in the Baroque Period, and English Choral Music in the 20th century. All Music A Level students play a full role in the musical life of the school, participating in and leading musical ensembles. The opportunity at A2 to prepare and perform a 15-minute solo recital is a popular one and Tiffin music students usually score highly in this part of the exam.

The AS course is structured as follows: Influences on Music - developing aural skills in preparation for structured listening questions, and exploring two Areas of Study for a written exam: 'The Western Classical Tradition' focuses on Beethoven's Symphony No 1;

'Choral Music in the Baroque Period' involves studying Bach Cantatas, Handel Oratorios and Purcell Verse Anthems. Creating Musical Ideas - Harmonising a 16 bar diatonic melody, developing an understanding of keys, chords and cadences. Interpreting Musical Ideas - two performances, each lasting between 5-8 minutes, taken from the following options: a solo performance on an instrument, a solo performance on voice, a solo performance on a second instrument, and ensemble performance.

At A level, the 3 units cover Music in Context (further development of aural skills in preparation for more detailed listening questions, and exploring two Areas of Study in detail), Creating Musical Ideas (Harmonising a Bach chorale melody and a classical string quartet) and Musical Performance (two or more contrasting performances in a programme lasting 10-15 minutes).

PHYSICS

Physics is a very popular subject in the Sixth Form with more than 80 students opting to continue their Physics studies into Year 12 each year. Unlike the other two sciences, our students commonly choose Physics in combination with a breadth of other subjects. In the past students have taken Physics as a complement to a first choice subject such as Art, Economics or History. The

typical Physics student at Tiffin does not have as strong GCSE grades as students taking the other two sciences, and is often leaving several options open before they make their university applications. With all that considered, Physics remains one of the most difficult subjects to achieve high grade when compared nationally to other A-level subjects - second only to

Chemistry[i]. The AQA course that we follow covers the full range of introductory Physics topics – Mechanics, Waves, Electricity, Fields and Nuclear Physics - as well as some 20th Century components - Particle Physics and Quantum Physics. From a choice of four topics the department chooses to teach the Astrophysics option at

the end of the second year. This is due to the passion many students already have for it and also the way in which it incorporates many of the core concepts.

Physics is a required subject for admission to Engineering and Physical Science courses at university.

PHILOSOPHY & THEOLOGY (OCR Religious Studies – Reformed Specification)

The Tiffin Philosophy and Theology A Level is taught as a survey course covering the history of Western metaphysics, ethics, political philosophy and epistemology from the Presocratics to the Postmoderns. In addition to assisting the “know thyself” process, the course enables students to critically examine the philosophical presuppositions of their other subjects and provides a framework that integrates the humanities, arts and natural and social sciences into a unified whole. Political philosophy, philosophy of science, anthropology, theology, psychology and the philosophy of mind are some of the main themes of the course. In Year 12 we study foundational scholars from antiquity,

medieval and early modern periods such as Socrates, Plato, Aristotle, Augustine, Aquinas, Descartes, Hume and Kant. In Year 13 we study more advanced topics with reference to 20th and 21st century Analytic and Continental philosophers, thinkers and movements including Wittgenstein, Heidegger, Pragmatism, Psychoanalysis, Existentialism, Marxism and Post-Liberalism. In order to assist the UCAS process, students use Departmentally developed booklets (designed especially for Oxbridge applicants) and attend seminars at Russell Group universities. We also intend to visit notable centres of philosophical, theological and cultural interest (e.g., Vienna, Edinburgh, London and/or Rome).

Notes

While every attempt has been made to ensure that the information in this guide is correct, there may be some changes before the start of the year. You may combine any A Level subjects although on rare occasions the timetable may make some combinations impossible, or it may be necessary to cancel an advertised course. If any subject is over-subscribed, priority will be given to those wishing to take it as a full A Level. If it is still oversubscribed, further methods will be used to reduce numbers for that subject. [

i] Relative difficulty of examinations in different subjects, CEM Centre, Durham University, 2008 <http://www.cem.org/attachments/SCORE2008report.pdf>
