



**D**are **E**xcel **S**hare **C**reate

# The Curriculum Explained



# The Sixth Form Curriculum

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## Introduction

This booklet has been designed to explain the different programs of study that we offer and provides details of our courses which have been designed to enable all of our students to formulate a suitable programme of study according to their ability, individual interests and future goals.

We offer a number of pathways in the Sixth Form, including traditional academic GCE Advanced levels, a more vocational BTEC route, a combination of A level and BTECs and a Foundation Year consisting of Level 2 courses.

## The GCE Advanced Level

We offer Advanced (A) levels in the majority of subject areas. The A level grades in these subjects are determined by examinations and assessments after two years of linear study.

As a result, we have reviewed the structure of A level courses and have made the decision that our students will no longer complete AS examinations at the end of Year 12. Instead we have introduced our own rigorous mid-course assessment process, which will form the basis of the students' predicted grades and will act as an indicator of A level performance in the same way as the AS results used to. The benefits of this approach include students receiving far more actual teaching time and a better overall chance of success in their A level examinations in Year 13.

## A Level Subjects for 2020/21

Art Photography	Art	Arabic	Biology
Business Studies	Chemistry	Computer Science	Drama
Economics	English Language	English Literature	French
Further Mathematics	Geography	History	Information Technology
Law	Mathematics	Media Studies	Music
Physics	Physical Education	Politics	Psychology
Spanish			

## BTEC Diploma/Vocational Courses

In addition to subjects available at Advanced Level, we are pleased to offer BTEC National Diplomas and BTEC Subsidiary Diplomas in a growing range of subjects. These qualifications involve a different approach to assessment, where instead of terminal examinations there is ongoing assessment of coursework. This educational pathway may be a more suitable Level 3 course for some students, with the resultant grades having an equivalency to A levels in regard to UCAS points.

BTEC/Vocational courses are typically two-year courses with no option of discontinuing the subject at the end of Year 12 with a qualification. Our current courses are as follows:

BTEC - Applied Science	Subsidiary Diploma	(1 A level equivalent)
BTEC - Creative Media Production	Diploma	(2 A level equivalent)
BTEC - Enterprise & Entrepreneurship	Subsidiary Diploma	(1 A level equivalent)
BTEC - Enterprise & Entrepreneurship	Diploma	(2 A level equivalent)
BTEC - Hospitality	Subsidiary Diploma	(1 A level equivalent)
BTEC - Sport	Subsidiary Diploma	(1 A level equivalent)
BTEC - Sport	Diploma	(2 A level equivalent)
BTEC - Travel & Tourism	Subsidiary Diploma	(1 A level equivalent)
BTEC - Travel & Tourism	Diploma	(2 A level equivalent)
RSL - Creative & Performing Arts (CAPA)	Subsidiary Diploma	(1 A level equivalent)
RSL - Music Practitioner (MUSPRA)	Subsidiary Diploma	(1 A level equivalent)

# The Sixth Form Curriculum

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## Academic Enrichment Subjects

In addition to our A level and BTEC options that are on offer in our Sixth Form, we also offer a range of academic enrichment subjects, designed to allow students to extend their learning in a number of areas. The academic enrichment subjects enable our students to gain an additional AS level to support their applications for university.

### Extended Project Qualification (EPQ)

For students who are interested in extending their knowledge of a specific subject we offer the EPQ. This qualification provides an opportunity for students to extend their abilities beyond an A level syllabus, and to prepare for university or their future career. Students have the choice of writing a 5000 word dissertation with academic referencing or to construct an artefact accompanied by a research paper. In either case, students learn advanced research skills as well as being given the opportunity to conduct their own primary research. Students are supported by a weekly lesson as well as regular meetings with a supervisor. With no set subject areas; students have the opportunity to pursue their own subject interests and determine their own title in conjunction with the EPQ Centre Coordinator.

### Mathematical Studies

Mathematical Studies is a course designed to maintain and develop real-life maths skills. The content that the students work through is not purely theoretical or abstract; it can be applied on a day-to-day basis in work, study or life and includes a financial maths element. The skills developed in the study of mathematics are increasingly important in the workplace and in higher education; Mathematical Studies will help students develop and maintain these essential skills.

### AS Philosophy

Through Philosophy, students explore, analyse and evaluate a variety of big questions which have preoccupied the greatest minds for centuries. In doing so, they develop precise methodologies and a profound grasp of how to construct logical arguments. An ideal discipline to teach intellectual rigour, it helps prepare students for the challenge of undergraduate thinking. The AS Philosophy course covers Epistemology: an exploration of the nature and limits of knowledge; and Moral Philosophy: how we decide the meaning of good, bad, right and wrong?

### AS Music Technology

Music Technology covers all aspects of the music production process and the development of music in the twentieth century. Students have the opportunity to develop their musical skills to a high level through the practice of creating music using technology and through listening and analysing music from a wide range of sources.

### AS Modern Languages

There may be an opportunity to study an AS in French or Spanish as an additional enrichment subject.

# Choosing an appropriate Academic Pathway

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## What will students study?

Most universities offer their places based on three subjects at A level or equivalent. This has been due to a fundamental change in the A level structure with the majority of schools in the UK only offering three A level subjects in Key Stage 5. As a result our students **will select 3 subjects** from the option columns listed in this booklet. **Please note you can only select 1 subject per column.** This will be either:

Option 1: Three separate A level subjects

Option 2: Two separate A level subjects with one BTEC Subsidiary Diploma (equivalent to 1 A level)

Option 3: One BTEC Diploma (equivalent to 2 A levels) and one A level subject

Option 4: One BTEC Diploma (equivalent to 2 A levels) and one BTEC Subsidiary Diploma (equivalent to 1 A level).

Option 5: 3 BTEC Subsidiary Diplomas

Students can then decide whether to select an optional academic enrichment programme to supplement their 3 subjects.

**It is essential that students choose 3 subjects in which they can attain academic success.**

Please note that students studying Further Mathematics must select Further Mathematics in Option Blocks 1 & 4 together with one subject from Blocks 2 & 3.

## Recommended Entry Criteria for Individual Subjects.

The minimum entry criteria to gain entrance onto a Level 3 pathway at DESC is five GCSE subjects at Grade 4 (Grade C) or above. Students who attain below this threshold will follow a Foundation Year pathway. (See below).

Students who typically attain 5 subjects at Grades 4 or 5 are often more suited to a BTEC/Vocational course. We would normally recommend that a student attains a minimum of a Grade 6 at GCSE to gain access onto an A level course. All entry criteria are used as a guide to ensure that a student will be successful in a specific subject area.

Certain subjects require higher GCSE grades to ensure success at A level. Mathematics, Biology, Chemistry and Physics require the minimum of a Grade 7 in Science and Mathematics at GCSE.

Our knowledgeable and supportive Sixth Form Team will meet with students and parents to ensure that all students are taking the most suitable courses for their ability and future aspirations.

## Foundation Year Course

DESC has a commitment to ensure an appropriate academic pathway for all of its students. Any student who struggles to gain the minimum entry criteria necessary to access Level 3 courses in Year 12 (5 GCSE subjects at grade C or Grade 4 and above), will have the opportunity to join the Foundation Year course. This course includes the following qualifications:

- BTEC Level 2–Extended Certificate (equivalent to 2 GCSE grades) in either Business Studies or Sport
- BTEC Level 2–Certificate (equivalent to 1 GCSE grade) in ICT
- Re-sit classes for GCSE English Language and Mathematics (if required)
- Individual mentoring sessions with a Personal Tutor
- Study Skills and Careers Coaching

# Option Blocks

Option Block 1

Option Block 2

Option Block 3

Option Block 4

## *A Level Subjects*

Art Photography	Art	Business Studies	Arabic
Biology	Biology	Chemistry	Art
Business Studies	Business Studies	Computer Science	Biology
Chemistry	Chemistry	Economics	Business Studies
Economics	Computer Science	English Literature	Economics
English Language	Drama	Geography	Further Mathematics
English Literature	English Language	History	History
Further Mathematics	French	Mathematics	Mathematics
Geography	History	Music	Media Studies
Mathematics	Information Technology	Physics	Physical Education
Politics	Law	Psychology	Politics
Psychology	Media Studies	Spanish	Psychology
	Physics		

## *Vocational Courses*

BTEC Enterprise & Entrepreneurship (EE) Diploma (2 A level equivalent)		BTEC Creative Media Production Diploma (2 A level equivalent)	
BTEC Travel & Tourism (TT) Diploma (2 A level equivalent)		BTEC Sport Diploma (2 A level equivalent)	
BTEC EE Subsidiary Diploma	BTEC TT Subsidiary Diploma	BTEC Sport Subsidiary Diploma	Creative & Performing Arts (CAPA) Subsidiary Diploma
BTEC Applied Science Subsidiary Diploma	Music Practitioner (MUSPRA) Subsidiary Diploma	BTEC Hospitality Subsidiary Diploma	

## *Optional Enrichment Subjects*

EPQ	EPQ	EPQ	EPQ
Mathematical Studies	Mathematical Studies	Mathematical Studies	Mathematical Studies
AS Philosophy	AS French	AS Spanish	AS Music Technology

\* Please note that students studying Further Maths will select Further Maths in Option Blocks 1 and 4 together with a subject in Block 2 & Block 3.

# Choosing the right subjects for future careers

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## Choosing the right subjects for your future aspirations

There are particular subjects which may be required or expected for entry to certain degree courses. These requirements may change as universities adjust their expectations, and only individual university websites should be considered authoritative.

At present the following guidelines should be borne in mind:

- Natural Science: Mathematics plus at least two of the three sciences advised
- Medicine, Dentistry, Veterinary Science: Mathematics, Chemistry and Biology strongly advised
- Pharmacy: Chemistry and Biology are strongly advised
- Engineering: Mathematics and Physics required, Further Mathematics is very useful
- Computing: Mathematics is required, Computer Science is useful
- Psychology: Usually two sciences are advised, but entry via arts subjects is possible
- Economics: Mathematics is strongly advised
- Business Studies, Management: Mathematical Studies is helpful but not essential
- Architecture: Either Mathematics or Physics is useful, and an art portfolio is essential
- Foreign languages: Two languages are desirable but not essential
- Law: History is a good facilitating subject, but other A levels at the highest grade are acceptable
- Journalism: English Language is strongly advised, however English Literature, Media or Psychology are useful
- Sports Science: Physical Education is required. Biology, Chemistry or Psychology are useful
- International Relations: Politics and History are mainly required. English Language is useful
- Physiotherapy: Biology is essential and a second science highly desirable (includes Mathematics)
- Music: Music A level essential and a minimum of Grade 7 in an instrument.
- Drama/Performing Arts: English Literature and/or Drama and Theatre Studies (history of performances and/or portfolio of relevant work)

**Further details about all of our courses can be found in our Subject Booklet publication.**

# Application Process

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## Admissions to the Sixth Form from current DESC students:

All internal students must complete an online Sixth Form Intentions Form by Wednesday 11th December 2019. Following their Sixth Form Guidance Interview they must then complete their final online Sixth Form Confirmation Form by Thursday 13th February 2020.

When the offer of a place is made by the College, a non-refundable deposit of AED 5,000 must be paid within 7 working days of the date of the offer letter. The AED 5,000 deposit will then be deducted from the first term's fee.

All offers of Sixth Form places are unconditional, as DESC will guarantee to find a suitable academic pathway for all students who are offered a place.

To access Level 3 courses, students must attain the minimum of 5 GCSE passes at Grade 4 (Grade C) or above. There are specific entry criteria to gain access onto A level courses, please see Choosing an Appropriate Academic Pathway for further details.

Students must confirm that they are taking up their place in the Sixth Form by 3pm UAE time on Thursday 20th August 2020 (GCSE Results Day) otherwise the place may be re-allocated to another student.

## Admissions to the Sixth Form from other secondary schools:

A completed online application form and a non-refundable Application Fee of AED 525 (inclusive of VAT) must be submitted by Thursday 30th January 2020. Applications made after this date will still be considered, however, preference will be given to students who apply before this date.

Supporting documentation, including a copy of the most recent school report and a letter of recommendation from the Headteacher/Head of Year needs to be provided along with the application form. All students are required to attend a formal interview to allow the College to make a final decision regarding the offer of a place in the Sixth Form.

If the offer of a place is made by the College, a non-refundable deposit of AED 8,525 must be paid within 7 working days of the date of the offer letter, this includes a non-refundable enrolment fee of AED 525 (inclusive of VAT). The AED 8,000 deposit will then be deducted from the first term's fee.

All offers of Sixth Form places are unconditional as DESC will guarantee to find a suitable academic pathway for all students who are offered a place with us.

To access Level 3 courses, students must attain the minimum of 5 GCSE passes at Grade C (Grade 4) or above. There are specific entry criteria to gain access onto A level courses, please see Choosing an Appropriate Academic Pathway for further details.

Students must confirm that they are taking up their place in the Sixth Form by 3pm UAE time on Thursday 20th August 2020 (GCSE Results Day) otherwise the place may be re-allocated to another student.

Please note:

An original Leaving Certificate from the previous school is required to register a child with any school in the United Arab Emirates. Please ensure you request a Transfer Certificate from your current school if you are arriving from outside Dubai. Students transferring from Dubai Schools should give notice to the current school that they will be transferring to DESC. Without a Leaving Certificate, a school is unable to register a student with the Ministry of Education and the student will not be able to attend school in the UAE. You should note that the certificate must not be dated more than three months prior to the date of entry to the new school.



# Admissions Timeline

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Date	Item
Wednesday 27th November 2019	Sixth Form Open Evening
Wednesday 27th November 2019	Sixth Form Applications officially open
Wednesday 11th December 2019	Deadline for Internal students to complete the online Sixth Form Intentions Form.
Sunday 12th January - Thursday 23rd January 2020	Year 11 Mock Examinations at DESC
Thursday 30th January 2020	Deadline for external applications to ensure an interview
Sunday 2nd February 2020	Internal Guidance Interviews based on Sixth Form confirmation form and mock examination results commence.
Thursday 13th February 2020	Deadline for completion of the online Sixth Form Confirmation Form
Tuesday 11th August 2020	Cambridge GCSE results
Thursday 13th August 2020	A level Results Day
Thursday 20th August 2020	GCSE Results Day, all Sixth Form places must be confirmed by 3pm UAE time.

**Please note that all Sixth Form places need to be confirmed in writing or by email by 3pm UAE time on Thursday 20th August 2020, otherwise the place may be allocated to another student.**

# Frequently asked questions (FAQs)

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## Frequently Asked Questions

- Q. How many subjects do I need to study?
- A. Typically, universities base their offers on 3 A level subjects. You will choose 3 subjects and decide whether to undertake an academic enrichment program such as an EPQ or Mathematical Studies. Please note that BTEC Diploma courses are equivalent to 2 A levels and BTEC Subsidiary courses are equivalent to 1 A level.
- Q. If I cannot choose my preferred subject combination, what can I do?
- A. Inform the college via email: [sixthformpastoral@dessc.sch.ae](mailto:sixthformpastoral@dessc.sch.ae) and make us aware of the subject difficulties, we will then look at possible alternatives to help you.
- Q. How can I choose my subjects when I don't know what I want to do in the future?
- A. Many students claim that they know what career they want to pursue, only to change their minds the following year. Although it is useful to have a clear idea, it is much better to pursue subjects that you enjoy and that you can do well in. Knowing your strengths and weaknesses and making decisions which are informed and realistic is part of being a Sixth Form student. In short, know your strengths and play to them.
- Q. Can I study a subject that I have not studied at GCSE?
- A. Some students have successfully studied A level courses that they have not studied previously, although the decision to do so is one which must be considered carefully in consultation with the appropriate members of staff. The final outcome, however, is decided at your guidance meeting or interview.
- Q. Can I change courses during the academic year?
- A. Making informed and carefully considered choices before you choose your A level or BTEC courses is crucial to ensure that you are studying the most appropriate subjects. Any change beyond this stage is not recommended, however, students will be allowed to swap subjects up to the end of September in the first term. This must be requested by using the appropriate form.
- Q. How much harder are A levels compared with GCSEs?
- A. The A level stands for 'Advanced', so all subjects at this level are **significantly more challenging**. Many students undergo a period of transition in the first couple of months of Year 12. All staff, however, are aware of this and can help you develop your expertise within that subject. The higher your GCSE results the more manageable you will find an Advanced level course.

Any additional questions that you might have can be answered by a member of the Sixth Form Team or by emailing [sixthformpastoral@dessc.sch.ae](mailto:sixthformpastoral@dessc.sch.ae)





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