



Choosing courses for study in the Bennett Sixth Form

What is the purpose of studying in the Bennett Sixth Form?

- Further academic study at school is rewarding because it is intellectually stimulating and challenging.
- By pursuing your studies more deeply in a narrower range of subjects you gain a strong level of knowledge and mastery of that subject
- A levels are the best progression route to university
- A level courses and our L3 Diploma courses provide a benchmark of your capability to a prospective employer; they are qualifications that are highly valued by employers

What can I study in the Bennett Sixth Form?

- There are a very wide range of courses which students can study in the Bennett Memorial School Sixth Form. The vast majority of our Sixth Form courses are A level courses. In addition to A levels we offer three **diploma** courses, in digital media, sport and physical activity and health and social care. These diploma courses are the equivalent to two A levels. We also offer the Cambridge Technical in ICT, which is equivalent to studying one A level. It is normally expected that Bennett Sixth Form students will also complete a Level Three Extended Project in year 12.

Linear A levels

Linear A levels are designed to be taught and learned over two years. All of the knowledge, understanding and skill that you learn will be assessed at the end of the course, at the end of Y13. In all A level subjects what you have learned will be assessed in a series of final examinations in the summer of 2024. At Bennett the only AS courses offered are a standalone mathematics AS and the Extended Project Qualification.

- **L3 Diploma Courses** – Bennett offers three L3 Diploma courses, in digital media, sport and physical activity and health and social care. We also offer an OCR Cambridge Technical Extended Certificate in ICT. In all cases the courses are studied over two years and students are expected to produce coursework which contributes to an assessed portfolio throughout both years of the course. There is also an examined element. Digital media, sport and physical activity and health and social care courses take up the equivalent of two A levels of time in a student's curriculum, ICT takes up the equivalent of one A level.

How do I combine different courses to arrive at my Sixth Form Programme?

All students starting in the Bennett Sixth Form in September 2022 will be required to be enrolled on a full time programme of study consisting of either:

- a. 3 A level courses plus the L3 Extended Project or AS mathematics
- b. 4 A level courses: this option is available to students with an APS of 6.5 or higher at GCSE.
- c. ICT BTEC course combined with 2 A level courses and the L3 Extended Project
- d. Digital media, sport and physical activity or health and social care course combined with 1 A level course and the L3 Extended Project.

In addition, all students will take part in our compulsory PACE programme, which involves one lesson a week, and our sport programme which involves two periods a week.

Some A level subjects are very highly sought after by universities. This is reflected in the way in which they make offers of places on their courses to students. Indeed, some courses at universities may simply not be offered to students who are not studying the right combination of subjects. Particularly, the following group of subjects are often the keystone to building the approaches to study that are the foundations for success at undergraduate level:

Mathematics and further mathematics, English literature, physics, biology, chemistry, geography, history and languages (classical and modern). Students entering the Bennett Sixth Form are therefore strongly encouraged to study these subjects at A level because they play an important role in realising the high aspirations that we have for our students.

We would recommend that students consider studying at least one of these subjects and in many cases two is advised since the universities make it clear that this is precisely the pattern that they see from their most successful applicants.

Why are we expected to study particular combinations of subjects?

A level courses complement one another. For example, in studying biology at A Level a strong and developing knowledge of chemistry is profoundly helpful. In studying physics, it is essential to have a high level of mathematics. It is necessary, therefore, to study A Level mathematics in order to study physics. It is also not possible to study one science on its own.

Sixth Form Science Pathways at Bennett Memorial

Experience has shown us that, in order to be successful at science A levels, at least 2 sciences need to be studied alongside each other. It is not possible to study one science on its own at Bennett. These are the combinations you may study in our science pathways:

If you select biology: You must also study at least one subject from: chemistry, physics, mathematics, psychology

If you select chemistry: You must also study at least one subject from: biology, physics, mathematics and psychology. You must study chemistry if you wish to study medicine at university.

If you select physics: You must study mathematics* and you may also select from further mathematics, biology, chemistry or psychology. You must study physics and mathematics A level if you wish to study engineering at university. Some universities also require further mathematics if you wish to study engineering at university.

If you select mathematics: You are not required to study any other science alongside this A level, mathematics may be studied with all other A levels at Bennett. You must study mathematics if you wish to study engineering at university. Some universities also require further mathematics, if you wish to study mathematics at university.

If you select further mathematics you must also select mathematics A level

If you select psychology you are not required to study any other science alongside this A level; psychology may be studied with all other A levels at Bennett, however we do strongly recommend a supporting science is studied alongside psychology as this builds effective foundations for undergraduate study of psychology.

**For students who wish to study medicine or veterinary medicine we will consider applications to study AS mathematics, in place of A level mathematics. On completion of AS mathematics students will be required to attend mathematics support sessions for physics A level. Students will be required to have an APS of 7+ in order to follow this pathway.*

The following courses will be offered in the Bennett Sixth Form from September 2022:

A level courses

Fine Art, Biology, Chemistry, Computer Science, Drama and Theatre Studies, English Language, English Literature, French, Further Mathematics, German, Geography, History, Latin, Mathematics, Media Studies, Music, Philosophy, Photography, Physics, Product Design, Psychology, Religious Studies, Textiles

Level 3 Courses

OCR Cambridge Technical Extended Certificate in IT: equivalent to 1 A level.

Digital Media Diploma, Sport and Physical Activity Diploma, Health and Social Care Diploma; these courses are equivalent to 2 A levels.

AS Mathematics

AS Extended Project Qualification

AS courses are ONE year courses only. **Students cannot study AS mathematics and then switch to A level mathematics at the end of Y12.**

To read further about the Russell Group's expectations about subject choices you can access their guide:

www.informedchoices.ac.uk

What do I need to achieve at GCSE to study in the Bennett Sixth Form?

All of the courses that we offer in the Bennett Sixth Form are Level Three courses, both Diplomas and A level courses. This means that they are meant to be the next step or challenge on from having secured good GCSE grades. It is vital that you have put down the right foundations at GCSE to be able to move on to study at Level Three. This means that we have some general requirements which are expected of all students coming into the Bennett Sixth Form to study, whatever the courses you choose to follow.

Some subjects make particular demands on students and it is clear that they need to have laid the right foundations in that particular subject before they are ready to undertake an A level course in it. This means that many of our A level courses have a subject specific requirement for achievement in the relevant GCSE or set of GCSEs.

The requirements for different Sixth Form Courses are all set out in the following table.

Course	Type of Qualification	Minimum General course requirement	Minimum Subject specific requirement
Biology	A level	APS 5.5	6 in at least 2 science GCSEs, including 6 in Biology
Chemistry	A level	APS 5.5	6 in at least 2 science GCSEs, including 6 in Chemistry
Computer Science	A level	APS 5.5	Grade 6 in GCSE Computing
L3 Digital Media Diploma	Diploma	APS 3.5	None
Drama and Theatre Studies	A level	APS 4, including 3 5s	5 in Drama or proven performance track record
English Language	A level	APS 4	5 in GCSE English Language
English Literature	A level	APS 5.5	5 in GCSE English Literature
L3 Extended Project	AS Project	APS 4.5	5 GCSE English Language
Fine Art	A level	APS 4, including 3 5s	5 in GCSE Fine Art
French	A level	APS 6	5 in GCSE French
Further Mathematics	A level	APS 5.5	7 in GCSE Mathematics
Geography	A level	APS 4, including 3 5s	4 in GCSE Geography
German	A level	APS 6	5 in GCSE German
History	A level	APS 4, including 3 5s	Where History has been studied at GCSE a grade 4 is required
L3 Health and Social Care	Diploma	APS 3.5	None
L3 OCR Cambridge Technical Extended Certificate in IT	Diploma	APS 3.5	None
Latin	A level	APS 6	5 in GCSE Latin
Mathematics	A level	APS 5.5	7 in GCSE Mathematics
Media Studies	A level	APS 4 including 3 5s	Grade 4 in GCSE English Language. Where Media Studies has been studied at GCSE a grade 4 is required
Music	A level	APS 5.5	Track record in performance and theory
Photography	A level	APS 4 including 3 5s	5 in Fine Art or Photography
Philosophy	A level	APS 5.5	None
Physical Education	Linear	APS 5.5	Active participant at club level
Physics	A level	APS 5.5	6 in at least 2 science GCSEs, including 6 in Physics
Product Design	A level	APS 4, including 3 5s	5 in Product Design or related
Psychology	A level	APS 5.5	6 in at least 2 science GCSEs
Religious Studies	A level	APS 4, including 3 5s	Where Religious Studies has been studied at GCSE a grade 4 is required
L3 Sport and Physical Activity Diploma	Diploma	APS 3.5	None
Textiles	A level	APS 4, including 3 5s	5 in Fine Art or Textiles

To arrive at a GCSE average points score you need to make a total of points for all the GCSEs taken and divide by 10, which is the number of GCSEs taken by students at Bennett.

For example,

A student with 2 GCSEs at Grade 4, 5 GCSEs at Grade 5, 2 GCSEs at grade 6 and 1 GCSE at Grade 7 = $(2 \times 4 + 5 \times 5 + 2 \times 6 + 1 \times 7) / 10 = \text{Average Points Score: } 5.2$

A student with 3 GCSEs at Grade 6, 3 GCSEs at Grade 7, 2 GCSEs at Grade 8 and one GCSE at Grade 9 = $(3 \times 6 + 3 \times 7 + 2 \times 8 + 1 \times 9) / 10 = \text{Average Points Score } 6.4$

HOW ARE A LEVELS STRUCTURED AND EXAMINED?

All of the A level subjects at Bennett are linear A levels; these are A level courses designed to be taught and learned over two years. Linear A levels are awarded from grade A* to E. Results for linear A level examinations are published on the Thursday of the second full week in August each year.

A level grades have points attached to them which may be used by universities when making offers to study on courses. The points are as follows:

A Level Grade	Tariff
A*	56
A	48
B	40
C	32
D	24
E	16

Diploma Courses in Digital Media, Sport and Physical Activity and Health and Social Care	Tariff
D* D*	112
D* D	104
D D	96
D M	80
M M	64
M P	48
P P	32

AS Mathematics	Tariff
A	20
B	16
C	12
D	6
E	0

Extended project Qualification	Tariff
A*	28
A	24
B	20
C	16
D	12
E	8

Cambridge Technical in ICT	Tariff
D*	56
D	48
M	32
P	16

Tariff points can be accrued from a range of qualifications that students may take beyond school. The UCAS site has a calculator which demonstrates how other qualifications can be included in the tariff.

<https://www.ucas.com/ucas/tariff-calculator>

Some Common Misconceptions

“Only students from grammar schools and independent schools get into Oxbridge”

60% of the undergraduate population of the Universities of Oxford and Cambridge come from normal non-selective state schools. Oxford and Cambridge admissions tutors provide opportunities to nonselective state school students which are not always available to students who study in independent or grammar school Sixth Forms. This includes summer schools, conferences and other outreach activities.

The 2011 Sutton Trust report *“Degrees of Success: University Chances by Individual School”* suggests that at that time, 85% of state school Oxbridge entries came from comprehensive schools. It comments: “Given their selective intake, grammar schools would appear to be under-represented among the most successful schools for Oxbridge entry “

“You need a business studies A level to study for a degree in the business or finance sector”

Students seeking a career in finance do not need to study A level business studies; employers in the financial sector wish to recruit students with high levels of skill in mathematics. Mathematics A level will enable students to demonstrate this.

“An A level in law is sought after by universities admitting students to study for law degrees”

Universities do not specify A level Law as an entry requirement for Law degrees. Strong performance in facilitating subjects where students have honed their skills in analytical writing will secure a place for them to study Law at university; these A level subjects are an expectation of Law firms recruiting trainee lawyers after graduation.

“Economics A level is required to study economics at university”

Economics A level is not a requirement to study Economics at university. Students are admitted to Economics undergraduate courses from a wide range of A levels. Mathematics is often an entry requirement and most students have studied at least one other facilitating subject, which is often History.

“Sports Science degrees are a good way into a career in physiotherapy”

In order to become a physiotherapist you must study an approved degree in physiotherapy. In order to be accepted to most physiotherapy degree courses you must study A level Biology. By studying at

least one other science, students will have kept a wide range of options open to them when they apply to physiotherapy courses in Y13.

“A level biology is easier than the other two natural sciences, chemistry and physics”

Results for each natural science in all UK centres (% of students achieving each grade) demonstrate that A level Biology, as a keystone subject, is a similar level of challenge to the other natural sciences.

	A*	A	B	C	D	E	U
Biology	7.0%	17.1%	20.9%	22.3%	18.5%	10.3%	3.9%
Chemistry	7.6%	21.5%	23.2%	19.9%	15%	8.9%	3.9%
Physics	8.7%	19.2%	22.5%	20.1%	15.6%	9.2%	4.7%

“Studying 5 A levels gives you a better chance of getting into a good university”

All universities’ entry criteria for all courses are based on 3 A levels, or the equivalent. No concession is made to students who have studied four or more A levels. Admissions tutors at the most competitive universities are seeking students with the highest A level grade in 3 subjects who can also demonstrate a rounded education, for example in their wider reading and relevant work experience. Studying 3 A levels leaves sufficient space for a student to undertake those activities effectively without compromising any of their A level grades.

“It doesn’t matter where you go to university, a degree is a degree”

We are extremely fortunate in the UK to have some of the best universities in the world. This means that those universities attract significant funding for research and the academics teaching in them are world experts in their subject discipline. These universities are known as the Russell Group, although there are also other universities, outside of this group, which are also very highly regarded for the student experience and for the specialisms in specific courses. Your experience as a student will be shaped by the lecturers leading your courses, and ultimately by the employers who are attracted to graduates from your chosen university because its graduates are highly regarded. It is important to make a very carefully researched application to university because your decision will have an impact on your undergraduate experience and your future employment prospects.

“Universities don’t worry about how well you did at GCSE, it is only your A levels which matter”

When you apply to university the only significant examination results admissions tutors will be able to see are your GCSE outcomes. In order for you to set yourself apart from other students across the UK, it is very important you have the best possible GCSE outcomes. For some competitive courses, for example medicine, universities will usually require a minimum of 7 grades at 9 – 7 at GCSE

“You have to have an A level in biology to become a nurse or doctor”

In order to study medicine, so that you can become a doctor, you MUST study **chemistry** AND one other science (Mathematics, Physics, Biology, or Psychology)

In order to be a nurse you must first go to university and complete a nursing degree. Nursing degree entry requirements specify at least one science must have been studied at A level. The Health and Social Care Diploma meets the entry criteria for some, but not all, nursing degrees.

“Only clever people do A levels and go to university”

Yes it is smart to go to do A levels and go to university, after all graduates earn on average 1.6 times as much as people who do not have a degree and you will have had one of the most fulfilling experiences of your life. This said, there is absolutely no reason that any young person who has got a good foundation from passing their GCSEs should not take up this opportunity, just as so many others are nationally. From 1993 to 2016, the number of school leavers going on to get a degree has tripled, from 13% to 40%.

“I can’t afford to go to university and I don’t want to take on student debt”

When you go to university your tuition fees are paid in the form of a student loan, which you do not begin to repay until you have completed your course and only then if, you are earning more than £27,295. You will repay 9% of any earnings over this amount. So, a graduate earning £31,000 per annum will pay back about £27.00 per month. If the loan has not been repaid after 30 years the loan is cleared and no further payments are required.