

Frequently Asked Questions about Sixth Form

1. What do A-level, AS and A2 mean?

A-level means Advanced level and refers to the overall qualification.

The International A-level consists of two stages called AS and A2. AS stands for the Advanced Subsidiary level. Students who complete the correct pattern of AS level units (usually 2 or 3 units at this level, depending on the subject) will be awarded an AS-level certificate or can continue the subject at A2. A2 refers to the final stage of International A-levels. Students who have successfully completed AS units in a subject move on to do A2 units, which are of a higher standard. Completing the correct sequence of units at both AS and A2 level means you have finished a full International A-level in a subject. University entrance is at the discretion of the university based on your AS and A2 grades. AS and A2 unit examinations are held in May or June.

2. What is International A-level?

The International A-level is especially for students studying outside of the UK. It follows a modular structure so you can build the qualification over time. Examinations take place in January and June.

3. What are the different AS level qualifications offered in TSPS Sixth Form?

We offer a wide range of AS level qualifications, accredited by Cambridge Assessment International Examination (CAIE), Pearson Edexcel, AQA examination boards, and BTEC qualifications from UK Pearson exam board.

4. What is BTEC?

BTEC stands for Business and Technology Educational Council. This is a vocational qualification. These enables you to develop skills, knowledge and understanding in the area you are studying, preparing you for both the world of work and progression into higher education.

BTECs are designed to equip students with up-to-date knowledge, skills and understanding of processes and principles in the subject they are studying. Learning in BTEC courses is more student-led and active although being supported and directed by teachers.

5. What are the BTEC qualifications Sheffield offer?

Sheffield offers BTEC level 3 qualifications. AS level students will do BTEC National Certificate where they must complete three units which are equivalent to 1 AS level. A level students will do BTEC National Subsidiary Diploma where they must complete six units which are equivalent to 1 A level.

6. How are BTEC qualifications assessed?

Our BTEC courses will range over a variety of subjects and are assessed internally within the school; this means that assessment is 100% coursework, assessed in a variety of ways. Each unit is assessed and graded through assignments. All units are internally assessed, and assessments are constructed by the school. Students will complete a range of assignments, case studies, and practical activities. All assessment is quality assured through internal verification and Edexcel carries out external verification activities (including sampling assessors' decisions using sector-specialist external verifiers).

Presentations, Written reports, observations, and practical work are few examples in which teachers can choose to assess learners to make the learning of subjects more practical and allow students who perform better in these methods of assessments to have an alternative to external examinations.

7. What is the grading system for BTEC qualifications?

Students are not graded A* - E but are graded Pass, Merit, and Distinction (P- D*).

8. What is Edexcel?

Edexcel, a Pearson company, is the UK's largest awarding body offering academic and vocational qualifications and testing to schools, colleges, employers and other places of learning in the UK and internationally. Edexcel was formed in 1996 by the merger of the Business & Technology Education Council (BTEC), the UK's leading provider of vocational qualifications, and the University of London Examinations & Assessment Council (ULEAC), one of the major exam boards for GCSEs and A-levels.

9. What is the difference between the exam boards offering GCE International A-level subjects?

There is no difference in the level or standard of the A-level offered by different exam boards. There are differences in emphasis and also some differences in the format of the papers.

10. When do IGCSE results come out?

Edexcel & AQA, GCSE results are published on 25th August 2022.

CAIE IGCSE results are published on 18th August 2022.

AQA Oxford results are published on 18th August 2022.

11. How many times a year are the GCE A level exams offered?

GCE A level exams are offered in January and June. However, not every module in every subject is offered in both sessions. Check with your Exams Officer for details.

12. How do I decide what courses I need to take?

Some key factors which you should take into account-

- Your interest in the subject
- Where your strengths lie
- Your future career plans
- The ability to get a high grade. Remember, you will be studying these subjects over the course of two years. It is essential that you do your research before selecting your A level subjects to make sure you have made the right choice for yourself.

Do not just follow subjects your friends/peers pick so as to stay in the same group, be adventurous, and grab the chance to meet new people.

13. Do I need to have studied the subject at GCSE in order to study it at A level?

It will depend on the subject. Some subjects like psychology are often not available at GCSE and so there is no expectation that you have studied it previously. This is something that is best discussed with individual Heads of Subjects as they will be able to explain the demands of their course and allow you to make an informed decision. Also, you can refer to the Subject Option Booklet uploaded in the Schoology.

14. What are the components of the Sixth Form curriculum?

In Sheffield Sixth Form, all students can expect the following as part of their study programme:

- Individualized Vocational Education
- Focused Independent Learning
- Skill Based Learning
- Community Outreach Programme
- Leadership Training
- Career Guidance Programme
- Work Experience
- Collaboration through Digital Platform
- Duke of Edinburgh Award

15. What are the entry requirements to TSPS Sixth Form?

Admission to AS level is subject to students meeting the following minimum entry requirements:

1. Grade requirement for the entry is a minimum of five 9 to 6 in IGCSE examinations which must include English and Maths with a minimum of 6.
2. Meeting each of the subject-specific entry requirements that are outlined on each subject page of the Sixth Form subject option booklet.
3. AS level students must take a minimum of four subjects.
4. For all candidates joining us from other schools, should submit a reference form from the current school, and this will be taken into account when the application is considered.

16. Are students allowed to change the subject option in between the academic year?

Changing an option is essentially possible but we must consider the time period, look at data/results, and consult with the teachers of the subjects you may wish to switch to. Timetable clashes may also be a barrier. However, the Head of Sixth Form will advise you as to whether or not you are making the best decision for you, and this will be on a case-by-case basis.

17. What is Focused Independent learning?

Sixth Form study is all about challenging academic study and preparing for far greater independence in future years. Independent study periods reflect how much time you should be studying in addition to your lessons if you are to achieve the very best results. It is important to use this time wisely and work during spare time and at home is essential.

18. What is EmSAT?

The EmSAT is a national system of standardized computer-based tests, based on United Arab Emirates national standards. The skills and knowledge of the year 12 students are measured as they complete their education and move for their higher education.

To know more details visit EmSAT website-

http://emsat.moe.gov.ae/emsat/EmSAT_achieve_en.aspx#mdate

To check the Test dates, visit the following link –

http://emsat.moe.gov.ae/emsat/EmSAT_achieve_en.aspx

19. What is UCAS?

It stands for Universities and Colleges Admissions Service. This is the organisation responsible for managing applications to higher education courses in the UK. They process more than two million applications for full-time undergraduate courses every year and also help students to find the right course via their excellent website

<https://www.ucas.com/>

20. What are UCAS points?

It is a system for allocating points to qualifications used to higher education. For example- grade A* and A is equivalent to 140 points, an A worth 120 points, B 100, C 80, D 60, and E 40 points. Please check the link for further reference –

http://www.ucas.com/students/ucas_tariff/

21. What is the Common App?

The Common Application, also known as the Common App, makes it easy to apply to multiple colleges using one application. The Common Application is a single online college application form used by over 700 colleges and universities. It also helps the applicants to track the necessary documents and important deadlines.

22. What Career Guidance Programme available in school?

We are extremely aware that our students need support in taking their next steps into the world of work or Higher Education. Our mentor programme is designed to help students to discover their career goals and gain the necessary skills and experiences to achieve them. Students can arrange an appointment with our Career Guidance Counselor who will support students in making applications to a wide range of sectors at different levels.

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