



The Next Step
Year 13 Courses
Higher Education Preparation
2018-19

Introduction

Students in Year 12 taking AS subjects are now over half way through their courses and are only two months away from their external exams. BTEC students are nearly half way through the first year of courses. This post 16 curriculum has already produced a number of advantages for students, in particular:

Those studying 4 AS subjects have benefited from a broad curriculum. Most students will be motivated by having exams in May and have worked with determination from the start.

However you do need to think about your programme for next year:

A student studying Pre-U courses is already on a two year course and will continue.

Students on AS courses or BTEC nationals (except BTEC Business Enterprise/ Sport/Fashion which are two year courses) need to decide what they wish to study in Year 13.

This booklet is designed to outline the Year 13 programme for 2018-19 for those on two year courses. It gives you guidance and helps you to make the important choices you need to make for your last year in Sixth Form.

If you are thinking of applying for any Higher Education courses you should look in particular at the information and advice at the back of this booklet before making any decisions about your courses next year.

Advanced Level Courses (A level courses)

Advanced level courses are the equivalent to the traditional GCE Advanced level. AS levels and A levels are now separate qualifications. AS levels do not contribute towards your final A level grade. Students who have been successful in a subject at AS can automatically go on to take that subject at A level. All courses studied at AS level are usually offered at A level. Information summaries for each A level course is available from your subject teachers. Success at Advanced level is essential for entry into Higher Education, employment and training.

Most A level courses comprise 2 units. In many cases one of these units will be examined by a synoptic paper which aims to test knowledge, skills and concepts taught across the full two years of the sixth form course. Students will take exams in each of the two units in June.

BTEC Nationals

If you are studying a BTEC qualification then you should have completed 3 units by the end of Year 12. These units should be at the level you are aiming for overall: Pass, Merit or Distinction. In Year 13 you will complete the final three units that will lead you to achieving an Extended Certificate.

You will need three Advanced Qualifications to apply for Higher Education. You will need to study 3 courses (the Extended Project would be an extra). Two will limit the Higher Education and job choices available and not take full advantage of the time you have. Four A level qualifications are not needed for application to any university and will put pressure on students to the detriment of their final results. (Some students may take Further Maths or GPR as a fourth A level, but this is an exception).

Therefore, if you are studying 4 subjects (or equivalent) you will need to discard one of these when you embark on Year 13 courses. This decision is not finalised until September when you have your AS results. Each A level will be taught for 10 lessons per fortnight.

GCSE Maths and English Language

You should ensure that you have a GCSE grade 4 and above in both these vital subjects. You will need to continue to attend lessons in these subjects if you have not achieved grade 4 in either of these subjects. Please note that some universities may require a grade 5.

Extended Project

It is possible for you to choose this course to study alongside your other Year 13 courses which will help provide breadth and balance to your studies. The Extended Project is a single piece of work of a student's choosing that requires evidence of planning, preparation, research and autonomous working. An extended project is about the size of half an A level and worth more UCAS points than an AS level.

The aim of the Extended Project is to strengthen programmes of study, testing a wider range of skills. An extended project could be, for example:

- a design
- a report with findings from an investigation or study
- a dissertation presenting an argument
- an artefact
- a performance.

Students can either produce a 5,000 word dissertation, or a 1,500 word report alongside an artefact or performance.

Students might use their project at interview stage for higher education and/or their personal statement on the UCAS form.

Students will be able to carry out a project on a topic of their own choosing, which may or may not be linked to their Year 13 subjects.

Students will be encouraged to take the Extended Project since it will develop research and independent learning skills, which will be of benefit to them when they progress to higher education or employment.

Why do an Extended Project?

The Extended Project offers opportunities for students to:

- have a significant input in the choice and design of an extended piece of work
- develop and apply decision-making and problem-solving skills, initiative and enterprise
- extend their planning, research, critical thinking, analytical, synthesis, evaluation and presentation skills
- use their learning experiences to support their personal aspirations for higher education and/or career development.
- many universities will make lower offers to students who have completed an extended project.

Ideally learners will acquire a 'tool kit' of skills, knowledge and understanding which they will be able to use when tackling similar projects in the future.

Grading

Achievement is reported on a scale of six grades, from A* to E, where A* is the highest.

Choosing and starting your courses

1. Read this booklet carefully. There will also be a special assembly to explain further.
2. Read the subject information sheets. Talk with, and consult, as many people as can be helpful:
 - Subject teachers
 - Your tutor

- The Careers sections of the Library (where you will find university prospectuses and UCAS guides)/Mrs Windsor – Career's Advisor
 - The Director of Sixth Form (Miss Ward) and the Deputy Director of Sixth Form (Mrs Glossop).
 - Senior staff
3. Select your courses. Fill in the Option Form and hand it your tutor by **Friday 23rd March**. The course selection is not final. You may want to change your mind about courses in September in the light of your examination results.
4. After you complete your AS exams your Year 13 courses will start immediately. This period after the AS exams is vital to your success. It will take the pressure off you in Year 13 and also enable you to do some useful work during the summer vacation. If you are studying 4 AS subjects you will start all 4 A level subjects until exam results help you to make your final choice in September. You may feel you are coping up until September but you will not after. You must discard a subject. Of course if you drop a subject in June it will be impossible for you to pick it up at A level at the start of the Autumn term.

Obtain your examination results on Thursday 16th August in the school hall.

After the results of your AS examinations if you are starting new AS courses or have a problem with your year 13 programme you should attend the Sixth Form Enrolment morning at the start of term in September.

Guidance and support

Your tutor will continue to be central to your progress. You will meet your tutor everyday at registration at 8.50am and 12.45pm. You will also have regular mentoring sessions.

Your tutor:

- Will be the first point of contact between teachers, student and parents.
- Will discuss your academic progress with you, especially after Progress Reports and full reports have been sent home.
- Will support you in setting targets for your work and then monitor their achievement.
- Will support and help you with your Higher Education/ job application and write your reference.
- Will help you to overcome any difficulties or problems.

You tutor is, therefore, vital to your success in Year 13 and progression to Higher Education and/or employment. You must continue to attend registration and tutor sessions to receive this support.

There continues to be other support available to you, in particular:

- The Director of Sixth Form (Miss Ward) and Deputy Director (Mrs Glossop)

Higher/Further Education

Universities and Colleges – the application process

The logical next step for most students will be to apply for a place at college or university.

The University College Admissions Service (UCAS) coordinates applications for most courses and in autumn 2018 they will need a completed form. This contains a choice of up to 5 courses, achieved exam results, a personal statement and a school reference. Most Higher Education courses are now covered by this scheme, including medical related courses, art and some professional qualifications. Students interested in Music or Drama schools or Art Foundation Courses will need to apply directly to the appropriate college.

It is expected that a majority of Midsomer Norton Sixth Form students will apply for Higher Education courses (over 80% this year) but each individual must come to her or his own decision. A degree or professional qualification can bring significant advantages in terms of earning power and personal development. Therefore we recommend that all Sixth Form students consider this option very carefully.

We have a good success rate with students applying to Oxbridge or Russell Group Universities. The admissions procedure to these universities is different to all the others and we run a special support programme to help students through the whole process. If students are interested in applying to either Oxford or Cambridge then they have been given the opportunity to attend an Oxbridge Conference earlier this year. There is a clear Oxbridge preparation programme. Details are available from Miss Ward. This will start in the Summer Term.

Below are some important dates for the Higher Education application process:

April onwards	Work with tutors in tutor periods on choices and applications for Higher Education
Tuesday 12 th April	A visit by Year 12 students to the Bath University UCAS/Higher Education Convention
June/July	Higher Education or Careers sessions – providing guidance on the application process. Also including visits to Universities and from employers
Sept	Higher Education Finance evening for parents and students
October	UCAS deadline for completion of applications for Oxbridge and medicine and veterinary science courses
November	Deadline for all other UCAS applications (school deadline)

Higher Education

Universities and Colleges – How they work

When universities receive application forms in the autumn the admissions tutors will consider Year 13 results, along with the numbers of AS and A Level courses taken and different experiences. To try and draw all this together UCAS have drawn up a tariff, assigning points to all qualifications and levels. Universities are encouraged to use this to make offers to applicants. The more points a student can accumulate, the greater the chance of obtaining a place.

Not all universities, however, use this Tariff and many will make offers on the basis of grades – i.e. they will ask for 3 A level subjects with particular grades. The more competitive courses and universities will always require grades rather than points.

For more precise information students should contact university admissions tutors directly, or consult paper or online prospectuses. The UCAS website also offers information in the entry profile for each course.

UCAS Tariff

In 2017, there were significant changes to the UCAS point scores (UCAS tariff). The new scores are detailed below. The UCAS website provides details of the point scores needed in the new tariff on the course search section of their website from June this year. Until this point, all offers will be detailed in the old tariff.

Pre-U Principal Subjects & GPR	Extended Project Qualification (EPQ)	GCE AS	GCE A level	New Tariff points	BTEC Level 3 National Certificate/ WJEC Level 3 Certificate (Criminology)	BTEC Level 3 National Extended Certificate / WJEC Level 3 Diploma (Criminology)
				168		
				160		
				152		
				144		
				128		
				112		
				104		
				96		
				80		
				64		
D1/D2			A*	56		D*
D3				52		
			A	48		D
M1				44		
M2			B	40		
M3				36		
			C	32		M
P1	A*			28	D*	
P2	A		D	24	D	
P3	B	A		20		
	C	B	E	16	M	P
	D	C		12		
		D		10		
	E			8	P	
		E		6		

A* Grade

You can only achieve an A* grade at A level by securing 90% across all A level modules.

Choosing A level subjects

Normally students choose three subjects to take in Year 13. It is advised that these should be three that a student enjoys, is best at, and therefore likely to be successful in. A student must also consider future application for Higher Education courses when choosing, as admissions tutors may have particular entry requirements. Here are some key points to bear in mind:

We advise students strongly to take a Year 13 course in a subject being considered for HE study.

Relatively few subjects have specific requirements for entry. Many of these are science based, eg Medicine usually requires Chemistry and Biology, Physics/Engineering requires Maths.

For some degrees there are Year 13 subjects which admissions tutors advise students to take in Year 13, eg. English Literature and/or History for Law, Chemistry for Geology, Maths for Psychology and Sociology.

You also need to be aware that if you are considering applying to either Oxbridge or the Russell group of universities that some subjects are welcomed more than others. If you are considering this make sure you check your choices with either Miss Ward or Mrs Glossop before you hand your choices form in.