



**Oxford Sixth Form College**

A NORD ANGLIA EDUCATION SCHOOL

# **Curriculum, teaching, learning & assessment policy.**

**Revised: June 2024**

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## Introduction

Oxford Sixth Form College specialises in preparing students intending to progress to study at a university or specialist college (e.g., art).

The College offers the following courses:

1. A-level/ GCE;
2. BTEC/ Extended Diploma BTEC;
3. One-year GCSE/IGCSE and GCSE/IGCSE Retake;
4. A-Level Entry Programme;
5. Advanced A-Level & Study Abroad Programme: The Oxford Experience;
6. English as an Additional Language (EAL) - IELTS courses alongside main courses of study.

The College seeks to:

- give every student the opportunity to learn, including those with an Education, Health and Care (EHC) plan;
- inspire students towards further study and enable them to make informed decisions whenever choices are open to them;
- help students to understand enough about the world of work to know what skills they need to succeed;
- provide a safe and supportive environment in which the students can flourish and develop independence and confidence;
- raise students' academic attainment and achievement;
- foster a strong work ethic amongst students;
- motivate students to have high academic ambitions;
- inspire gifted and talented students to achieve to the best of their ability;
- provide individualised learning, reflecting the learning needs of each student to enable them to reach their potential, academically and personally;
- identify and support students with EAL and SEND needs and those who find academic work challenging;
- raise the attainment of all students of all abilities and to identify and provide outstanding challenges to our students using individualised learning plans (ILPs);
- raise the College's academic standing;
- achieve better GCSE/IGCSE, A-level and BTEC results;
- foster a sense of curiosity and of excitement about the world of ideas and nurture a life-long love of learning;
- provide an education that promotes the fundamental British values of democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty, and mutual respect and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs;
- provide a curriculum which links curriculum learning with careers. For each subject teachers should highlight the relevance of their subjects for a wide range of future career paths.

The curriculum, teaching and learning at Oxford Sixth Form College shall:

- provide a flexible approach which matches the needs of each individual student;
- provide stretch materials for the more able students;
- contribute effectively to the intellectual, physical, personal attainment and development of the students;
- provide a supportive yet mature environment within which students may reach their full potential and where they may build their self-esteem;
- give students up to the end of GCSE studies experience in linguistic, mathematical, scientific, technological, human and social, physical, and aesthetic and creative education;
- teach subject content appropriate for the ages, gender, backgrounds and aptitudes of our students;
- enable students to acquire skills in speaking and listening, literacy and numeracy;
- provide personal, social and health education which reflects the College's aims and ethos and encourages respect for other people, paying particular regard to the protected characteristics set out in the 2010 Equality Act;
- provide accurate, up-to-date careers advice, information and guidance that is presented in an impartial manner to enable all students to make informed choices about a broad range of career options and help to encourage them to fulfil their potential;
- enable students to acquire new knowledge and make good progress according to their ability, so that they increase their understanding and develop their skills in the subjects taught;
- provide constructive feedback to enhance students' progress;
- provide students with adequate preparation for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of adult life and of life in British society;
- be enriched by a programme of activities which is appropriate to the students' educational needs in relation to personal, social, emotional and physical development and communication and language skills;
- foster students' self-motivation and self-efficacy with the application of intellectual, physical and creative effort, interest in their work and the ability to think and learn for themselves;
- enable students to develop their self-awareness, self-esteem and self-confidence;
- foster in students a sense of delight in the life of the mind and the application of intellectual, physical or creative interest in their work, and the ability to think and learn for themselves;
- involve well-planned lessons, effective teaching methods, suitable activities, and the management of classroom time efficiently;
- show a good understanding of the aptitudes, needs and prior attainments of the students, and ensure that these are taken into account in the planning of lessons;
- ensure that teachers possess appropriate knowledge and understanding of the subjects they teach and use this effectively in planning and teaching;
- be based on classroom resources of an adequate quality, quantity and range;
- ensure regular and thorough assessment of students' work;

- meet the requirements and spirit of the *Children and Families Act 2014* and the *SEN and Disability Code of Practice, 0-25 years 2014*;
- promote the fundamental British values of democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty, and mutual respect and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs;
- encourage respect for other people, paying particular regard to the protected characteristics set out in Chapter 1 of Part 2 of the *Equality Act 2010*;
- not discriminate against students, as is noted in Part 6 of the *Equality Act 2010*;
- enable students to distinguish right from wrong and to respect the civil and criminal law of England;
- encourage pupils to accept responsibility for their behaviour, show initiative and understand how they can contribute positively to the lives of those living and working in the locality in which the College is situated and to society more widely;
- enable students to acquire a broad general knowledge of and respect for public institutions and services in England;
- cultivate further tolerance and harmony between different cultural traditions by enabling students to acquire an appreciation of and respect for their own and other cultures;
- encourage respect for democracy and support for participation in the democratic process, including respect for the basis on which the law is made and applied in England;
- avoid political indoctrination;
- ensure that effective strategies are in place for managing students' conduct and encouraging responsible behaviour;
- be subject to regular evaluation and review by the Senior Management Team (SMT) and Academic Management Team (*i.e.* DoS's);
- link learning to relevant careers in each subject area that are appropriate for all students including those with SEND, who are EAL and the gifted and talented students.

The College aims to follow the DfE non-statutory guidance of November 2014 in helping students to achieve:

- An understanding of how citizens can influence decision-making through the democratic process;
- An appreciation that living under the rule of law protects individual citizens and is essential for their well-being and safety;
- An understanding that there is a separation of power between the executive and the judiciary, and that while some public bodies such as the police and the army can be held to account through Parliament, others such as the courts maintain independence;
- An understanding that the freedom to hold other faiths and beliefs is protected in law;

- An acceptance that people having different faiths or beliefs to oneself (or having none) should be accepted and tolerated, and should not be the cause of prejudicial or discriminatory behaviour;
- An understanding of the importance of identifying and combatting discrimination.

## **Structures**

A-level courses are delivered in groups of 8 to 10 students. GCSE, EAL, and BTEC are taught in groups 10.

Teaching occurs between 9:00 am and 5.15 pm Monday to Friday. Each period lasts 45 minutes.

Every student has an individual timetable which they will receive during induction at the beginning of their course.

During an admissions interview, students are advised on their best choice of programme and combination of subjects therein to achieve their future objectives for university study and / or careers.

The College is unable to offer the following:

- the practical / coursework components in design technology, PE and drama A-levels;
- some particular specifications that are used by a very small number of schools;
- International Baccalaureate;
- Pre-U courses;
- certain level 2 and level 3 courses. All available subjects are published on the website.

Students are given study skills guidance to help them reflect on appropriate study methods and develop strategies for effective study and time management.

Teachers prepare schemes of work for their subjects at the start of the course which include pedagogical details, so teachers create simplified versions for students (e.g. year planners). The schemes of work show how the specification will be covered over the length of the course. These are updated regularly to reflect the students' progress and needs.

Teachers set appropriate homework tasks for students to complete each week. The rationale behind this is to encourage the skills for independent study and research as well as consolidating recent learning. A minimum of 4 progress tests are set for students to complete in class under supervision. Upper Sixth students sit mid-term examinations in Autumn Term and mock examinations before half term of Spring Term (before sitting public examinations in Summer Term), while Lower Sixth students sit End-of-Year examinations in Summer Term.

Students receive written feedback on their work which shows how they can improve, and Senior Tutors discuss this with each student, face-to-face.

Teaching across the College is class-based with any individual tuition being the exception rather than the rule.

Teaching approaches and courses are adapted to the needs and aptitudes of each student.

Students can only be entered for examinations and other assessments at the College if they have been prepared for these by the College teachers.

## Course details

### 1. A-level

- A range of A-level courses within Arts, Languages, Maths, Sciences, and Social-sciences;
- Students are provided with some flexibility of subject combinations;
- Students are advised to take subject combinations which match their interests, strengths and longer-term aspirations;
- Students can study with us on a part-time or full-time basis though the vast majority are full-time;
- Students studying a 2-year A-level programme sit end of academic year public examinations in June in their final year;
- Students are generally not entered for AS level examinations unless there is an exceptional reason for this.

### 2. BTEC/ Extended Diploma BTEC

Three BTEC programmes are available:

- **BTEC Level 3 Business Extended Certificate.**  
4 units - Equivalent to one A level.  
1 unit has controlled assessment and 1 unit has formal exam  
42% coursework
- **BTEC level 3 Business Diploma.**  
8 units - Equivalent to two A levels.  
2 units have controlled assessments and 1 unit has formal exam  
55% coursework
- **BTEC Level 3 Business Extended Diploma**  
13 units - Equivalent to three A levels.  
3 units have controlled assessments and 1 unit has formal exam  
58% coursework
- Students learn to conduct research, give presentations, produce papers and projects, work in teams, develop their communication skills and study a wide range of business topics;
- There is feedback at the end of each unit, allowing students to develop a clear sense of how they are progressing;

- The structure of the qualification allows a great deal of choice and flexibility. All students take core units which introduce the fundamentals of business;
- For the Diploma and Extended Diploma, students will also study mandatory units;
- The other units come from a list of more specialist areas, including Human Resources, Promotion, Market Research and Setting up a Small Business;
- There is only one traditional exam, which is 11% of the course, and is on Business and Personal Finance. The controlled assessments are assignments written on a computer in 3 hours and based on prior research and a pre-release case study. Most of the assessment is by coursework, which is set and marked by the teacher.

### **3. One-year GCSE/IGCSE courses and Retake options**

- Students follow a full-time, one-year course, aimed primarily at 15/16-year-old international students;
- The core curriculum consists of the following subjects:
  - English Literature; English Language or English as a Second Language
  - Mathematics
  - Biology
  - Chemistry
  - Physics
- Additional components of the GCSE programme include:
  - Sport
  - Art
  - Personal Development (PSHE)

#### ***GCSE/IGCSE Re-take***

- A small number of students join the College each year to retake GCSE/IGCSE courses either alongside A-level courses or before starting A-levels. Where only one or two subjects need to be retaken to satisfy university requirements, it is possible to begin two A-levels and to retake the GCSE subjects alongside these. Where possible, students will join existing GCSE classes.

### **4. A-Level Entry Programme**

- Intended for international students whose English level is below 5.5 (IELTS bands);
- These learners can improve their English level in this programme in order to progress academically to A-levels;
- They will study GCSE topics to support their fundamental knowledge of the courses they intend on studying. This excludes BTEC as level 2 is not offered at the College;
- During the course students are expected to build their study skills and become more autonomous in their learning. Development of lexis (vocabulary) and syntax (grammar) takes place during this programme in preparation for students' continued progression to A-levels;
- Termly tests are taken to determine progress and overall performance;
- No external assessments will be taken at the end of the year other than an IELTS exam.

#### **Advanced A-Level Entry & the Study Abroad Programme (The Oxford Experience)**

- This course is for international students with a level of English of around 6.0 or higher (IELTS bands);
- The students can start in Sept, January or April for 3, 2, or 1 term, respectively;

## **5. English as an Additional Language (EAL)**

- All second language students are tested on arrival and offered appropriate support to pursue their academic studies and to reach the required IELTS level for the university or career of their choice. They are formerly tested in November and June;
- Classes comprise a maximum of 10 or 12 students;
- Students will experience being taught by more than one teacher, specialising in one or two skills;
- Weekly and termly testing is conducted to ensure that students are exam ready;
- Students will have to be autonomous learners outside the classroom, focussing on English speaking, practising writing and other skills, and reading books to help improve their lexical awareness.

### **Senior Tutors**

Each student is allocated to a Senior Tutor (ST) who oversees both their academic progress and personal wellbeing. Students meet their ST once a week, in groups and one to one as required. Groups may be used to introduce topics such as university entry or to discuss PSHE topics.

The Senior Tutor:

- enables each student to have an adult in the College to approach with any difficulties they have;
- acts as a conduit for all information internally and externally to ensure that they have a holistic view of all their students;
- supports the student pastorally, understanding and guiding their social emotional and personal development and overseeing their medical needs;
- oversees each student's academic work to help them make excellent progress, if necessary, negotiating about possible changes of course;
- helps keep absence levels to a minimum;
- ensures that each student's application for the next stage of their education is appropriate for the individual and that all references and other reporting requirements are carried out promptly and professionally;
- guides the student through the University application process (UCAS).

### **Assessments**

Assessments are a central aspect of students' learning and progress. Assessment tasks should always be created with at least one specific learning goal in mind. Whilst summative assessments are essential, particular emphasis should be placed on the use of formative assessment. Feedback should be designed to maximise learning, enabling students to see *how* progress can be made.

Teachers will set targets and students will be encouraged to achieve these, and this involves independent learning outside the classroom as well as in-class work. The students are encouraged to be responsible for their own learning.



## Homework

All homework should serve one or more of the following functions to:

- consolidate classwork;
- strengthen memory skills (e.g. vocabulary);
- provide background knowledge for lessons;
- develop academic skills (e.g. essay writing);
- encourage independent learning;
- facilitate differentiation via extension tasks / remedial work;
- assess attainment levels and inform teaching; and
- identify how students can improve.

### Frequency, amount and type of homework

Homework must be set at least once a week in each subject as follows:

Academic Programme	Hours of homework per week
PAL	10 hours in total
EAP (IELTS)	5 hours in total
GCSE	1.5 hours <i>per subject</i>
BTEC	5 hours in total
A level year 1	3 hours <i>per subject</i>
A level year 2	4 hours <i>per subject</i>

Teachers should set a variety of homework tasks which reflect the nature of the subject and the types of assessment for which students will encounter. Emphasis should be placed upon the regular use of examination-based questions. For subjects which include coursework, homework will often entail preparation / continuation of this. When a progress test is being set, it is acceptable for the homework for the week to be to revise for the test. However, note that students will vary in their ability to revise effectively, so in many cases it will still be appropriate for written homework tasks to be set (e.g. revision questions / making cue cards).

Teachers will adapt homework to suit the needs and abilities of their students; for example, a gifted and talented student may be given an extension piece of work to complete on top of, or instead of, the homework given to their peers, whereas those students with SEND needs may be given work that has been specifically adapted to meet their needs.

### Administration and monitoring of homework

As a College we expect students to become more independent sooner than in traditional schools. Post-GCSE students will be required to take even more personal responsibility for the management of their homework. Students are encouraged to use a suitable way of recording homework (e.g. electronic diary or planner), which is used to reinforce good study habits. It is expected that STs will assist students in organising their weekly private study programmes and will monitor them regularly. Teachers have responsibility for the setting, marking, recording, and reporting of homework. Teachers will address any

concerns about the production of work directly with the student and take appropriate action to ensure that work is completed to the best of the student's ability. STs regularly receive updates on homework progress for their students, including any concerns about non-completion, lateness or inadequate quality. Should issues such as the late or non-production of homework or sub-standard work persist, teachers and the relevant ST will work together to agree on a plan of action which the ST will address with the student and, where necessary, the parents – and keep the subject teacher and DoS informed. A variety of measures will be used to address difficulties as appropriate including compulsory attendance at scheduled private study sessions in the library and periodic review meetings with parents and Vice Principal or Assistant Principal. The College does not use detentions and the emphasis should always be on support and encouragement rather than sanctions.

### **Progress tests**

The calendar for the year shows the dates by which progress tests should have been completed. At least one progress test must be set each half-term. All students are set regular progress tests in line with the College calendar and instructions from the relevant Directors of Studies (DoSs). **Progress tests must always result in a student being given a percentage mark and grade.** Formative assessments should also be provided to show students how to improve.

In addition to progress tests, teachers should also set shorter class tests that are appropriate to encourage students to learn (e.g. a list of definitions / vocabulary items).

### **Mid-Term and Mock Examinations**

The College calendar for the year shows the date for mid-term and mock examinations. These examinations have many benefits:

- attaining practice in writing under real exam conditions;
- obtaining practice in and familiarity with the relevant routines and regulations;
- assessment of students' understanding of large sections of the specification;
- providing more accurate summative assessment to students;
- providing more specific feedback to students about how they can improve.

**Mid-terms and mocks must always result in a student being given a percentage mark and grade.** Formative assessments should also be provided to show students how to improve.

### **Marking**

Marking is an opportunity to help students to improve. Feedback encourages a dialogue between the teacher and student which allows the student to manage their learning more effectively. Students should typically receive written and verbal feedback on work set. Marking should clearly identify the students' strengths and areas in which they can improve. Feedback should not only show which aspects of work can be improved but will give students specific guidance on the steps which can be taken to make improvements (e.g. reference to Assessment Objectives (AOs) to identify how to improve a response). Teachers should mark work regularly with the following best practice in mind:

- Formative comments should identify strengths in work;
- Formative comments should make specific suggestions for improvements;
- Lesson time should be used to consider feedback and discuss this with the teacher;
- Specific action points for a student to address as well as targets for future learning are helpful;
- There is an expectation that students should respond to action points and correct mistakes or errors where indicated;
- There should be explicit evidence of engagement with developing the quality of their work (e.g. re-drafting an answer/ annotating a test paper with corrections).

*\*e.g. re-drafting an answer / annotating a test paper with corrections.*

Teachers should record the level / mark and grade of their students' work in their gradebook and input termly grades in Gradebooks on iSAMS. The information gained from marking an assessment should be used alongside other information to inform future teaching.

## **Grading**

Teachers may adopt a non-grading policy for *some* work, based on evidence that students are more likely to pay attention to feedback and apply suggestions for progress if a specific mark or grade is not given. **In such cases, teachers should keep a record of any grade they have privately ascribed to that work.**

However, it is essential that students are made aware of their progress relative to awarding body standards on a regular basis. Such awareness can be gained through mock examination grading. As a whole course or topic progresses, students will be given grades for homework. Where examination-type questions are used, grading will be based on awarding body standards (e.g. band descriptors; assessment objectives and grade boundaries).

It is essential that students have a clear sense of how they are being assessed and a firm grasp of how a grade has been determined. Detailed reference to awarding body standards should be provided to students, allowing them to appreciate fully the assessment criteria used by the relevant awarding body. Students must have a clear sense of what is required to achieve particular grades. Exemplar materials and model answers are useful in showing students what is required for a particular grade. **Teachers must keep a record of marking and assessment for all students. Information about student progress and assessments should be shared with the DoSs and relevant colleagues.** Results for progress tests and mock exams must be recorded in the relevant gradebooks on iSAMS. The record of marking and assessment must be designed to maximise the ability of teachers and DoSs to assess and respond to the needs of the individual student and class. It should also provide an objective and easily accessible record of students' progress which is available to senior staff and parents as and when necessary.

## Frequency and speed of returning marking

Students should have their work marked by teachers at least once a week in every subject. This may be supplemented by oral feedback from teachers or by peer assessment. Marking will be returned as quickly as possible. This maximises both the learning impact of the task as well as student motivation. **We aim to return marked work within a week of submission.**

## Progress tracking information

A college-wide Progress Tracking document is maintained and covers a variety of indicators of attainment and progress for each student in each subject. It is used by the DoSs, STs and the SMT to track student progress and inform future policy on teaching and learning. This includes information such as GCSE scores, notification of SEND, regular effort and attainment grades by subject, mock grades and public examination results.

## Reports

Reports are vital in helping student progress and in helping parents and guardians to understand how their child is progressing. The idea is to report more briefly and more often, to keep parents and guardians in the picture. The calendar for the year shows the dates for reporting. **Staff must meet deadlines for reports.**

## Good reports

- show what a student can do at the time of writing;
- are not solely negative;
- identify clearly what a student must do to make progress;
- are professional and do not comment on the College or colleagues;
- are not the first mention of problems;
- show that the teacher knows the student well;
- are written grammatically correct.

## Work scrutiny

DoSs are responsible for monitoring assessment within their curriculum areas and for ensuring that the agreed policies and practices are being carried out by all colleagues with the faculties. This includes **the DoSs conducting regular work scrutiny to check that students are making appropriate progress and that consistency of practice, with regard to the nature and amount of homework set and the quality and effectiveness of the marking, is being maintained by all colleagues in the department.**

## College trips

Trips, whether local or outside of Oxford, require much thought and planning. Teachers are to read the **'Health and safety on trips policy'** and **'Crisis management policy'** (e.g. London) before obtaining **approval from the DoS**. The planning document will need

to be submitted to the DoS at least **two weeks prior** the date of the trip. For local trips, the RA must be submitted no later than one week before the start of the trip. The Educational Visits Coordinator (EVC) will inform the DoS when the risk assessment has been approved. The names of the students and contact details of their parents/agent or guardian (whichever is the key contact) attending the trip must be left at reception during the trip. If the trip is to take place during a weekend, a copy of all paperwork must be given to either the Principal or Vice Principal before departure.

### **Linked policies**

- SEND policy
- EAL policy
- Examination Policy Health & Safety on trips and visits policy
- Crisis management policy
- Safeguarding and Child Protection policy