

Post-16 Option - Sixth Form

SIXTH FORM

Our Isle of Wight Sixth Forms

- Sixth Form consists of Years 12 and 13 (and sometimes Year 14)
- On the Island, all Sixth Forms are part of a wider school community, although they are not necessarily based on the same campus as the 'lower' school
- The following schools have Sixth Forms – Cowes Enterprise College, Ryde Academy, The Island VI Form, Christ the King College
- The following fee-paying schools have sixth forms - Ryde School with Upper Chine, Priory School

Mainland Sixth Form Colleges

- Some students travel off the Isle of Wight for their Sixth Form studies
- Many local mainland Sixth Forms are Sixth Form Colleges – which are not attached to schools
- Students are responsible for their own travel costs but may receive some financial support
- Commutable mainland Sixth Form Colleges include Havant and South Downs College, Portsmouth College, Richard Taunton's College (Southampton), Peter Symonds College (Winchester), Barton Peveril College (Eastleigh), Brockenhurst College (New Forest), and University Technical College (UTC Portsmouth)
- Check websites for application timelines – eg. Peter Symonds requires applications to be made before Christmas of Year 11

Curriculum

- The majority of students in Sixth Forms study for A-levels. A-levels consist of a learning programme over 2 academic years, with a final exam assessment
- A-levels are more difficult academically than GCSE's, hence the name Advanced level, and students usually notice a marked transition to the higher standard required
- A-levels require time, commitment, and motivation. Students will have achieved relatively high GCSE grades if they are to be successful at A-level (at least 5 GCSE's at grade 9 - 5)
- Students usually take 3 and occasionally 4 A-levels in subjects of their choice
- A-levels are available in a wide range of subjects – some of them are subjects that students may have studied at GCSE level already (eg. Maths, English, Geography, Biology, etc), and others may be new subjects for students (eg. Further Maths, Psychology, Sociology, Law, Economics, Politics, etc)
- Increasing numbers of students are combining a single or double BTEC level 3 or other vocational course with 1 or 2 A-levels rather than taking 3 full A-levels. For more information on vocational courses see the Further Education pages.
- A-level **passes** are graded from A* through to E
- Universities attach 'UCAS points' to each A-level grade, which they may use to form an offer for entry to their degree courses. The UCAS tariff points awarded are: A* (56), A (48), B(40), C (32), D (24), E (16). Similar points are awarded to BTEC L3 courses. Around one third of universities use UCAS points – the majority ask for specific A-level or BTEC grades. Some university courses require specific A-level subjects to have been studied. Eg. Medicine requires Chemistry and Biology A-levels, Engineering requires Maths and usually Physics A-levels (or an Engineering BTEC Level 3).

Progression and value of A-levels

- A-levels have been available (in different formats) for a long time, since 1951 in fact, and are hence well established and understood by teachers, parents and employers
- A-levels involve the study of several different subjects, so they provide flexibility and breadth
- A-levels are academically rigorous, so they are well regarded by both universities and employers
- Progression after A-levels is generally to University or employment/apprenticeship. Some students take a 'Gap Year' following A-levels when they might travel or do temporary work
- Progression is very often to University (nationally, around 80% of students who successfully complete A-levels progress to University), although students can also progress to an Apprenticeship (a mixture of work and vocational training), or Employment (a job)
- Some University degree courses require specific A-level subjects to have been studied – the Russell Group website www.informedchoices.ac.uk provides advice on this

University degree research

- UCAS is the website (and administration centre) through which all students apply to University
- The UCAS database www.ucas.com contains details of all the degree courses in the UK
- There are about 130 Universities in the UK. The Russell Group consists of 24 Universities
- Students who are considering going to University should start their degree research at the end of Y10 and throughout Y11, as well as during Y12, to ensure they know which A-level subjects to take and what grades Universities expect for their chosen subject
- Application to University is in the Autumn Term of Y13. For most degree subjects applications can be made to 5 universities to begin with. The grades needed will depend on **both** the University **and** the subject.
- To begin research into degree courses, do the following:
 - Log on to www.ucas.com
 - In the 'find courses, information and more' write the name of the degree you are considering
 - Some degrees which are very similar have a variety of names. Try a short form to generate a wider search eg. Forensic Science – write Forensic (This will bring up a wider range of degrees)
 - If you want to search for 'joint honours' (two subject) degrees, put both subjects separated by a semi-colon (ie. English; Drama)
 - **Click on the 'undergraduate' tab – this will generate a list of all the first degrees at universities related to the words you have put in the search box**
 - You will receive a long list of degree courses to investigate further. You can see at a glance all the universities where they do these courses on the filter tab (map).
 - **To investigate further**
 - On the map, click on the university and course you are interested in
 - If you want further information, scroll to the end of the entry and you can click to go directly to that course on the University's own website (click 'visit our course page' tab)
 - This takes you out of the UCAS website directly to the University webpage which contains a lot of detail on that degree course including content, entry requirements, career prospects. You can then order a prospectus (free) and check Open Day visit dates