

Questions Answered

Quality Assured

Qualifications Achieved

What are AS and A Levels?

AS (Advanced Subsidiary) and A (Advanced) Level qualifications focus on traditional study skills. They normally take two years to complete full-time. Students can choose from a wide range of academic subjects, as well as some 'applied' (work-related) subjects.

AS and A levels are at Level 3 on the National Qualifications Framework. The framework shows how different types of qualifications compare, in terms of the demands they place on learners.

A Levels: AS plus A2

A levels are made up of the AS Level and the A2. Each part makes up 50 per cent of the overall A Level grade.

Year One - AS Level

An AS Level can be taken as either a free standing qualification, or it can be the first half of the full A Level. At the end of the AS year, there are two options:

- Take the AS Level as the final qualification
- or
- Continue to the second year and go for the full A Level qualification

Year Two - The A2

In year two of a full A Level, students take the A2 - this is not a separate qualification, but the second half of the A Level. The A2 is designed to deepen the knowledge gained during the AS Level.

Extended Project Qualification (EPQ)

This extra qualification can be taken at AS Level and requires the student to choose a topic of interest, complete an assignment or research project on this topic and deliver a presentation. The EPQ is equivalent in size to half an A Level and requires students to show evidence of planning, preparation, research and independent working. The EPQ earns extra UCAS points, is highly regarded by universities and is recommended for any student planning on applying to Oxford or Cambridge.

Who can take A Levels?

Many students take AS and A Level qualifications in Years 12 and 13, after completing their GCSEs.

Entry Requirements and Subject Choice

Entry Requirements

To study A Levels at Queen Alexandra, students need at least five GCSEs at grades A*-C. Sometimes, you need a grade B or above at GCSE in a particular subject to take it at AS or A Level (see prospectus for full details).

Subjects Available

Queen Alexandra offers a wide range of AS and A Level subjects giving students the chance to continue with subjects taken in years 10 and 11 and/or take new ones.

AS and A2 Subjects available at Queen Alexandra Sixth Form College

- Biology
- Business Studies
- Chemistry
- Classical Civilisation
- English Language
- English Literature
- English Language & Literature
- Further Maths
- General Studies
- Geography
- History
- ICT
- Law
- Maths
- Modern Foreign Language (delivered in partnership)
- Physical Education
- Physics
- Psychology
- Sociology
- Use of Maths

The Creative Studios (Our dedicated centre for Art & Design)

- Art & Design (Fine Art)
- Drama & Theatre Studies
- Fashion & Textiles
- Film Studies
- Graphic Design
- Media Studies
- Photography

How Many AS Subjects to Choose

Queen Alexandra students study four AS Levels in the first year and then continue with three or four A2 subjects in the second year to gain full A Level qualifications. Some students take the EPQ as well to increase their UCAS points for university entry. Students also follow a functional skills programme (Maths and English) alongside their chosen subjects.

How to Choose the Best Combination of Subjects

When choosing a combination of A Level subjects, it is important that students select the best options to secure a good grade as well as choosing subjects that they will enjoy and fit in with their career plans. Even if a student is not sure where they want to go in life yet, A Level studies will help to broaden their skills and experience to progress to Higher Education at college or university, or to go straight into employment. There can be big differences between GCSE and A Level. It is important to read the content of the course and details of how it is assessed (exams or coursework).

Student Support and Success

Queen Alexandra is the perfect bridge between school and university. We want students to develop some independence, but ensure that they are fully supported every step of the way. From the start, students are set clear expectations on areas such as punctuality, attendance, behaviour, homework and study during free periods.

Personal Learning Plans

All students receive a Personal Learning Plan (PLP) to track their progress and achievements against specific goals, and subject teachers set homework and give feedback on each piece of work showing progress against these individual student targets. We use a system called ProMonitor: an electronic tracking system which flags any concerns and can be accessed by parents to monitor their child's progress online.

Pastoral Tutors

Every student is allocated a pastoral tutor who will be there to help with their Personal Learning Plan and keep them on track for success. Tutorials are part of the timetable to ensure that progress can be tracked and that students are fully supported throughout their course. This helps students to manage college work through regular one-to-one contact. This helps each individual to become better equipped to meet future employers' requirements and be ready to progress onto Higher Education courses at college or university.

How Students are Assessed

In most subjects the AS and A2 are each made up of two units, although in some subjects they are each three units. The majority of the assessment is by written exams, although in some subjects there is a small amount of coursework. There is also assessment of practical skills or portfolio generation in subjects like Science or Art. The College prospectus explains the assessment of each AS and A2 subject.

Grades and Marks

AS and A Levels are graded A* to E. January module results are announced in March and end of year results in August. Results slips will also show a score on something called the 'uniform mark scale' (UMS). The AS is scored out of 300 UMS marks, and the A Level out of 600 marks.

Predicated Grades for A Level

GCSE results and predicated grades are a good guide to a student's abilities in a particular subject. Use this information to inform A Level subject choices that are most likely to result in good grades. On the home page of the website www.queenalex.co.uk there is a grade predictor tool which allows students to enter their predicted or actual GCSE results and see what they are likely to achieve as an A Level grade.

Higher Education and Careers

Where can A Levels lead?

A and AS Levels are one of the main routes into Higher Education, but they're also useful if you want to go straight into a job.

UCAS points

Normally, to take a Higher Education course you will need at least two full A Levels or equivalent Level 3 qualification. If you're applying to university or college, A and AS Levels earn the following points in the 'UCAS Tariff':

Grade	A Level	AS Level
A*	140	n/a
A	120	60
B	100	50
C	80	40
D	60	30
E	40	20

Parental Support

Parents play a vital role in supporting students and are invited to meet personal tutors to talk about their progress. Parents' evenings and regular written reports ensure that you can have confidence that student learning and progression is top of the agenda.

Careers Guidance

At Queen Alexandra Sixth Form College, each individual's learning and development is of paramount importance to us and we take pride in offering the highest level of support and guidance. The College's Learner Services team has been accredited with the Matrix standard which recognises excellence in delivering information, advice and guidance on learning and work. Our team of dedicated student advisors and transition tutors are there to help with any questions or concerns as well as offering careers guidance to keep students up-to-date with opportunities for the future and how to get there.

Business Ambassadors and the Queen Alexandra Scholarship Programme

Queen Alexandra works with a group of influential business ambassadors who can offer students work placement or internship opportunities. The College is committed to ensuring that students gain work-ready skills and have every opportunity to get involved in real business projects and competitions to enhance their personal statement or CV. Our brand new Scholarship scheme aims to assist high achieving students looking to progress from A Levels to university by matching their needs to business sponsors which can offer them some financial assistance and work placement opportunities.

For more details of scholarships visit www.queenalex.co.uk/scholarship-programme.php

A Level Requirements for Degrees

The information below aims to give you some general advice about essential and useful A Level choices for specific degree courses. It is essential that you check university prospectuses for confirmation. Please note that a number of degrees are open to students from a wide range of academic backgrounds and it is often the grade that is important rather than the subject.

Accountancy/Maths

Accountancy/Banking/Financial Management

Useful A Levels: Maths, Economics

Mathematics

Essential A Levels: Maths, Further Maths

Useful A Levels: Physics

Business, Computing and Law

Business Studies

Useful A Levels: Maths, Business Studies, Modern

Foreign Languages

Computing

Essential A Levels: for some courses Maths

Useful A Levels: Physics, ICT, Further Maths

Law

Useful A Levels: Law, History, Psychology, English

Literature/Language

Management Studies

Useful A Levels: Maths, Business Studies

Creative Industries

Art and Design

Essential A Levels: Fine Art, Graphic Design, Photography
(depending on specialist area of Art and Design)

Drama

Essential A Levels: Drama and Theatre Studies

Useful A Levels: English Literature, English Language

Fashion Industry

Essential A Levels: Fashion and Textiles

Useful A Levels: Fine Art, Photography, Graphic Design,
English Language

Media Studies (including Communication Studies)

Essential A Levels: English Language or Literature,

Media Studies

Useful A Levels: Sociology, Psychology

Engineering and Construction

Aeronautical Engineering

Essential A Levels: Maths, Physics

Useful A Levels: Design Technology, Further Maths

Architectural Technology

Essential A Levels: Maths, Design Technology

Useful A Levels: Physics, ICT

Chemical Engineering

Essential A Levels: Chemistry, Maths, Physics

Building Services Engineering, Building Surveying, Construction Management

Essential A Levels: Maths and/or Physics

Electrical/Electronic Engineering

Essential A Levels: Maths, Physics

Useful A Levels: Further Maths, ICT

Engineering (general)

Essential A Levels: Maths, Physics

Useful A Levels: Further Maths, Design Technology, ICT

Mechanical Engineering

Essential A Levels: Maths, Physics

Useful A Levels: Design Technology, Further Maths, ICT

Surveying

Useful A Levels: Maths, Physics

Humanities

Classical Studies

Essential A Levels:

For Classical Studies or Classical Civilisations most
subjects are accepted Useful A Levels: Modern Foreign
Languages, English Literature, History

English

Essential A Levels: English Literature or English
Language

Useful A Levels: History, Modern Foreign Language

European Studies

Essential A Levels: Modern Foreign Language

Useful A Levels: Business Studies, English
Literature/Language, Sociology

French

Essential A Levels: French

Useful A Levels: another Modern Foreign Language,
English Literature, History

History

Essential A Levels: History

Useful A Levels: English Literature, Classical Civilisation,
Sociology

History of Art

Useful A Levels: Art, English Literature, History, Modern
Foreign Language

Sociology

Useful A Levels: Sociology, Psychology, Geography,
Media Studies

A Level Requirements for Degrees

Science-based Degrees

Anthropology

Useful A Levels: Biology, Sociology

Biochemistry

Essential A Levels: Chemistry

Useful A Levels: Maths, Physics, Biology

Biology

Essential A Levels: Biology, Chemistry

Useful A Levels: Maths, Physics

Chemistry

Essential A Levels: Chemistry, Maths, Physics

Useful A Levels: Biology

Dentistry

Essential A Levels: Chemistry, Biology

Useful A Levels: Maths, Physics

Environmental Science/Studies

Essential A Levels: Two from Biology, Chemistry, Maths, Physics, Geography

Geography

Essential A Levels: Geography

Useful A Levels: Biology, Chemistry, Maths, Physics

Geology/Earth Sciences

Essential A Levels: Two from Maths, Physics, Chemistry, Biology

Useful A Levels: Geography

Medicine

Essential A Levels: Chemistry, Biology and either Maths or Physics

Materials Science (including Biomedical Materials Science)

Essential A Levels: Two from Chemistry, Maths, Physics and Biology

Nursing and Midwifery

Useful A Levels: Biology or another science

Occupational therapy

Essential A Levels: Biology

Useful A Levels: Psychology, Physical Education, Sociology or another science

Optometry (Ophthalmic Optics)

Essential A Levels: Two from Biology, Chemistry, Maths, Physics

Pharmacy

Essential A Levels: Chemistry and two from Biology, Maths, Physics

Physics

Essential A Levels: Maths, Physics

Useful A Levels: Further Maths, Chemistry

Essential A Levels: Biology

Useful A Levels: Chemistry, Maths, Physics

Psychology

Essential A Levels: One from Biology, Chemistry, Maths or Physics

Useful A Levels: Psychology, Sociology

Speech therapy

Essential A Levels: Biology

Useful A Levels: Chemistry, Physics, Modern Foreign Language, English Language (and Literature), Psychology

Sports Science/Physical Education

Essential A Levels: One from Biology, Chemistry, Maths or Physics

Useful A Levels: Business Studies, Physical Education,

Psychology

Veterinary Science

Essential A Levels: Chemistry, Biology and one from Maths or Physics

Teaching/Education

Childhood Studies and Education (not teacher training)

Useful A Levels: Sociology, Psychology, English Language

Teacher training (primary and/or secondary)

Essential A Levels: at least one from the area in which you want to specialise

Useful A Levels: English Language, English Literature, ICT



Useful Links and Contacts:

View Queen Alexandra's DVD and hear what our current students think of the sixth form college at www.vimeo.com/channels/queenalex

Look at the College Prospectus for details of AS and A2 course content

Visit www.queenalex.co.uk for the latest news and open event information

Call **0191 229 5123** to speak to a student advisor at Queen Alexandra Sixth Form College

Visit www.ucas.com for information on Higher Education entry requirements and links to university websites



Providing excellent education in partnership with

