



Choosing courses for Sixth Form

The main factor when choosing Sixth Form courses is knowing what you love doing. If you study, and then find a job that relies upon, a subject you are really interested in you are very likely to enjoy whatever you choose to do and to succeed.

Employers and Universities

In broad terms, employers and universities are all looking for the same things in a candidate:

- Qualifications that are relevant and / or show a good enough level of application and skill
- Reading or research around a subject to show a particular interest and self-motivation
- Broader life skills which can be shown via any combination of work experience, volunteering, DofE, Scouts, mentoring younger people, hobbies that are pursued to a high standard, etc.

Sixth Form students should take 3 subjects, work hard in them so they do well and then ensure they are active outside school. There is no need to take 4 subjects for jobs or employment.

Grades and UCAS tariff points

Some people consider university courses they are interested in when they choose their Sixth Form courses. It is worth understanding the way offers are made. Offers for degree apprenticeships tend to be made on the same basis.

Many people believe A-Levels are necessary to be allowed to study a degree course at university. In fact, many universities are happy to offer places to people who have studies BTEC / CTEC courses. For some courses, a university will simply state a number of 'Tariff' points and do not mind which qualifications lead to these; for other courses (for example medicine) a university might specify the subjects to study and minimum grade requirements by subject.

Some qualifications can be taken in one year. In these courses, the top-scoring BTEC / CTEC certificates are worth more than the top-scoring AS Levels (as is a top-scoring EPQ).

For two-year courses, high attainment in BTEC/CTEC is worth the same number of points as an A* at A-Level. BTEC and CTEC qualifications are highly respected by universities and employers.

1 Year courses :

1-year qualifications are normally awarded at the end of year 12.

Tariff	AS Level	BTEC / CTEC	EPQ
28	-	Distinction *	A*
24	-	Distinction	A
20	A	-	B
16	B	Merit	C
12	C	-	D
10	D	-	-
8	-	Pass	E
6	E	-	-

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2 Year Courses

Tariff	A Level	BTEC / CTEC Extended Certificate
56	A*	Distinction *
48	A	Distinction
40	B	-
32	C	Merit
28	-	-
24	D	-
16	E	Pass

3 A-Levels is enough

There is a widespread belief that some universities require students to have taken 4 A-Levels, this is no longer true. For example, in 2021 every single Y13 student from The Willink, who wanted to go on to university, received an offer (in fact most of them received five offers).

Offers were received from Oxford, Imperial and the majority of the Russell Group Universities as well as a wide range of other establishments. Many of our students have also secured places on degree level apprenticeships. None of the offers were for 4 A-Levels, the highest offer was A*A A or A*A*B (both 152 points). It is better to do 3 subjects well, than to struggle with 4.

A current example

To do accounting at Oxford Brookes, the requirement is 104 tariff points (information correct on 12 June 2023). This means there are no subject specific requirements to be accepted on to this course; students who study English, History and Psychology will be as welcome as those who study Business, Economics and Mathematics.

In the selection process Oxford Brookes will look for evidence of academic success (likely to achieve 104 points or more), an interest in accounting and other qualities that candidates will bring to the university.

Examples of the ways in which 104 points can be achieved include:

3 A Levels: BCC

2 A Levels: BC plus 1 CTEC: Merit

1 EPQ grade B (20) plus 1 CTEC Merit (32) plus 2 A Levels: CD

The main factor

Choose subjects you enjoy and which could lead you on to courses and careers you are interested in. Sixth Form, Higher Education and Apprenticeships are all difficult at times, it is far easier (and more rewarding) to dig deep and overcome difficult moments if you are interested in the courses you have chosen to study.

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