

# Curriculum Policy 2016

## 1 Context

LSI College teaches a variety of courses leading to AS and A level qualifications. The age range is mainly 16-19 but there are also a number of mature students at the college. Subjects are taught within a weekly framework of 9am and 4pm, each lesson being 60 minutes' duration. Occasionally, lessons may take place outside these hours.

Free periods may be used for the purposes of independent study. We believe that developing independent study skills is an integral part of sixth-form study and essential preparation for the university courses that are the ultimate academic aspiration of the vast majority of our students.

## 2 Summary

Our curriculum policy is summarised in the following broad aims. Subsequent sections of this policy explain how these may be achieved in detail.

- To assist students in achieving the best possible grades, both in absolute and value-added terms.
- To identify and deliver the most suitable academic programme for students' individual needs, including, if necessary, organising for different subjects to be taken over different course durations.
- To help students develop study skills, effective time-management and revision strategies relevant to the exams they are taking that will also provide a good basis for the next stage of their education.
- To create a timetable for Years 12 (Lower Sixth) and 13 (Upper Sixth) sufficiently flexible to accommodate students' subject preferences.
- To provide students with opportunities to develop extra-curricular interests whilst retaining freedom of academic subject choice.
- To foster and promote self-motivation, self-discipline and an awareness of the skills needed for independent learning.
- To ensure students' workloads are spread evenly over the academic year through careful academic planning.
- To enable students to make informed choices about higher education and careers and maximise their chances of securing appropriate places on the most competitive university courses.
- To promote social, spiritual, moral and cultural development.
- To develop an understanding of and respect for international values, such as democracy, individual liberty and the rule of law, thereby engendering a sense of citizenship.

### 3 Two-year A level programmes

One of the underlying principles of the A level system is to ensure that students demonstrate academic breadth at sixth-form level. LSI College offers around 20 AS/A2/A level courses and imposes no restrictions on possible subject combinations.

The advertised subjects available at A level are:

*Mathematics, Further mathematics, ICT, Business, Geography, Psychology, Biology, Chemistry, Physics, French, Spanish, German, English Literature, English Language, History, Politics, Economics*

Our policy is to offer individually-tailored subject combinations that reflect students' interests and academic strengths, leaving them well placed to pursue future academic goals. Detailed guidance is provided on possible choices prior to decisions being made and there is scope for students to change subject once the courses are under way, if one of their original choices proves unsuitable. Such changes are dependent on the availability of individual tuition throughout the year (which also enables students to catch up on work missed) and by a full college-wide timetable change in January.

The A level system is changing over the period 2015-17. Until 2015 all subjects were structured according to the Curriculum 2000 AS/A2 model: the A level is determined by separate AS and A2 examinations, usually taken at the end of the first year and second year of study. Over a period of three years all subjects will be moving to a linear model in which the AS and A level are decoupled. The A level will be assessed by examinations typically taken at the end of two years that address the whole two years of study. The AS level will remain but will not count towards the A level should the student decide to pursue the subject further. Subjects structured around the old AS/A2 model will in our in-house literature be referred to as *legacy* subjects and subject structured around the new AS/A2 model will be referred to as *reformed* subjects.

The basic model for the Sixth Form is for students to study four subjects in the Lower Sixth and continue with three in the Upper Sixth. Less able students may take fewer subjects or choose a broader spectrum of subjects over the two years but study some of them only to AS. Equally, the more able have the opportunity to continue all four subjects into the second year or to study additional subjects, either at the AS level or as further A levels. Students can also choose to take the EPQ. Lower-sixth students may take it either instead of a fourth subject or alongside all four subjects. Upper-sixth students may take it alongside their subjects too. The suitability and viability of studying for the EPQ will be determined on an individual basis. There is also the possibility of studying Mathematics for STEP examinations.

With legacy subjects, although possible for those wishing to sit AS examinations to defer them until the Upper Sixth, the general LSI College policy is for students who want to take AS examinations to do so at the end of the Lower Sixth. There is, however, scope for students to retake units in the Upper Sixth and supplementary tuition is available to assist students with their preparations for these examinations. With reformed subjects, the value and purpose of the AS in relation to the A level are different. The advisability of taking the AS as opposed to sitting an internal exam will vary on a case-by-case basis but both options are available. A student wishing to sit an AS examination in a subject they are continuing with into the Upper Sixth would have to sit it at the end of the Lower Sixth. A student wishing to sit an AS

examination in a reformed subject they are not continuing into the Upper Sixth would still be advised to sit it at the end of the Lower Sixth.

A further feature of LSI College's sixth-form curriculum is the Social Activities programme. A wide range of sporting and enrichment activities are offered. This is run in conjunction with LSI Hampstead, offering the students the opportunity to interact and grow with a wide range of other students from diverse backgrounds.

LSI College places great importance on teaching study skills. Study skills will be taught in dedicated seminars and embedded in subject-specific lessons. Students will learn:

- how to become self-motivated and independent thinkers.
- reading skills,
- essay writing skills,
- how to organise their time,
- how to take notes,
- how to manage revision,
- how to make presentations.
- the importance of perseverance when encountering and working through increasingly advanced and challenging material.
- how evaluation and criticism of work can be positive measures to help self-improvement.
- How to distinguish positive and negative criticism and the need to develop strength of character and self-belief so as to be able to cope with the latter.
- how to cope with stress.
- students pursuing the EPQ will learn further skills in this area, such as how to undertake academic research and how to format an essay properly with bibliography, footnotes, appendices and the like.

Our policy for the upper-sixth curriculum is that programmes are shaped by the results in their end of year examinations. For legacy subjects, this will mean their AS results (unless they are taking the AS at the same time as the A2 at the end of the Upper Sixth). For reformed subjects, this will mean results in internal examinations. If the student is coming to LSI College from another school then, where possible, the same basis of assessment will be used. For legacy subjects, performance in AS examinations also strongly influences whether students are taught in "self-contained" groups. If students have not performed well at AS or in their internal examinations, they may be placed in groups which are repeating all of the AS units alongside their A2 units, while student who have performed well will focus on A2, especially in legacy subjects.

## **5 One-year A level programme**

These self-contained courses cover the complete A level between September and June. For legacy subjects, this means both the AS and the A2. For reformed subjects, this means the complete linear A level. Our one-year courses cater for students coming from a wider variety of prior educational backgrounds, achievements and even ages than any of the other courses.

They are taken by students with a wide variety of different needs:

- able first-year students wishing to accelerate their studies
- weaker second-year students who need to revise the whole of AS alongside their A2 studies
- stronger second-year students who wish to replace one of their subject selections
  - more experienced students who may have completed their A levels at another school (or even completed the school curriculum in another country) and need either to retake over a full year or take up one or more subjects from scratch. Our one-year programme is accordingly subject to more streaming by prior academic background than other year groups.

## **6 PSHE**

LSI College aims to help students gain an awareness of personal, social, health and economic issues. We aim to foster an understanding and appreciation of international values and citizenship, with the longer-term aim of enabling students to lead confident, healthy lives in a tolerant and democratic society. We also aim to instil a sense of respect for those with protected characteristics so that students respect others' choices to follow lifestyles that they may not choose to follow themselves. We also feel it is important to help students develop a sense of personal resilience to help them cope with a complex world and maintain their well-being.

This may be covered in the following ways:

- Tutors are encouraged at all levels to explore PSHE and Citizenship themes, where appropriate, when teaching their own subjects with opportunities for doing so signposted in individual schemes of work.
- LSI College's pastoral support system and general ethos contribute to the personal and social development of our students.

## **8 Schemes of Work**

Schemes of Work are produced for all subjects at all levels offered at LSI College. Tutors are responsible for regularly reviewing their schemes of work, ensuring that they are up to date and being followed. The Principal ensures that they are being followed.

## **9 Appropriateness**

One of the key features of LSI's academic provision is that we tailor each student's programme to meet their specific needs. Every effort is made during interview to identify the student's strengths and weaknesses and to determine the most appropriate academic programme for their particular needs, often by means of detailed discussion with individual subject tutors.

For all year groups, the college seeks to ensure that the subject matter taught is appropriate for the ages and aptitudes of the students. Our maximum class size of ten ensures that the interactive teaching and learning styles deployed maximise the development of students' speaking, listening and literacy skills. The principal language of instruction is English, except in some Modern Foreign Language lessons, in which the target language is used when appropriate.

Our small class sizes allow plenty of scope for one-to-one attention and for tasks to be tailored to the needs of the individual, giving all students the opportunity to learn and progress. Where possible and appropriate, setting by ability in certain subjects facilitates variations in the nature and rate of delivery of specification content to ensure all students are appropriately stretched and challenged.

The college accepts students with diagnosed dyslexia, dyspraxia and similar conditions. In all cases, a student identified as having special needs is assessed and an Individual Education Plan (IEP) produced. This is then disseminated to the student's subject tutor, the Registrar and the Administrative Team so that appropriate provisions for examinations can be made (where necessary). IEPs detail the precise nature of the educational need and how it can be met. For further details of the provision made for students with disabilities and/or special needs, please refer to the college's SEND policy.

Overseas students who have not yet attained an IELTS score of 7.0 (or equivalent) are required to have IELTS lessons alongside those for their academic subjects. IELTS students may be taught alongside LSI Hampstead's IELTS students. For further details of the provision made for EAL students, refer to the college's EAL policy.

## **11 Preparation for the future**

### *Making informed subject choices*

At interview, careful guidance is given on the combination of subjects an individual student finally chooses to take. We try to identify the student's intellectual interests, academic strengths and weaknesses and, looking to the future, assist them in fulfilling their academic and employment aspirations.

### *University and careers*

The vast majority of the students leaving our Sixth Form go on to university. The process of selecting the most appropriate university courses begins early in the lower-sixth year.

### *Entrance exams and interview practice*

It is increasingly the case that, for very competitive courses, students are required to sit additional university entrance tests, such as UKCAT, BMAT, LNAT and HAT. Specialist seminars and individual tuition may be provided to assist students with their preparations for these examinations. Similarly, a programme of interview preparation is provided for students applying to Oxford and Cambridge, as well as for Medicine and Veterinary Science.

### *Gap Year*

Students are regularly provided with detailed information and advice on both voluntary and paid activities for a gap year, or for the summer vacation.

### *Non-Academic Routes*

Students who do not wish to go to university will be given advice to help them choose their career path.

### *Life skills*

It is our hope that all LSI College students, including those with us for only a short time, will leave the college with transferable life skills. Within all courses, students are assisted in understanding the importance and positive consequences of effective time management. Punctual arrival to lessons and adherence to homework deadlines are seen as fundamental to success and all staff members help students to appreciate that these are vital life skills too. The celebration of success in our sports teams reflects the importance which is placed on teamwork. Within the classroom, the small class sizes lend themselves to the fostering of a sense of togetherness and a desire to help each other.

All students who wish to work in careers such as Medicine, Dentistry and Law are advised to enhance their prospects via work experience. Although a student's Director of Studies will take overall responsibility for careers and university advice, students are strongly encouraged to do their own research. The college does not have a structured work experience programme in place and does not, for example, supply lists of providers and template letters. Rather, it prefers Directors of Studies to assist individual students via careful direction and checking of applications. Our purpose is to encourage the students to develop their personal skills of research and negotiation.

More broadly, students are prepared for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of adult life via the PSHE and Social Activities programmes (see also above). The purpose of this is to encourage a healthy lifestyle, increase social and cultural awareness, develop an understanding of the evolving economic and political context in the UK and, more generally, broaden students' horizons.

## **11 Monitoring and review**

Curriculum and timetable arrangements are monitored on an ongoing basis by the Administration Team and Principal and may be altered in the light of changing circumstances. The college also reserves the right to vary its curriculum in individual cases, if special circumstances require it.

## **12 Other relevant documents**

- Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEN/D) Policy
- English as an Additional Language (EAL) Policy
- Gifted and Talented Policy

- Departmental Handbooks and Schemes of Work
- Staff Handbook (especially the section on Teaching and Learning)
- PSHE Policy
- College Prospectus
- Teaching and Learning Policy
- E-Safety Policy
- A level Subject Prospectus

Next review

*Sean Buckley and Phil Scherb September 2017*

*This policy is available in large print if requested.*