



Chetham's School of Music

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Vice Principal: Mrs Julia Harrison
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Sixth Form Curriculum Handbook

2026-27

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Overview of the Sixth Form Curriculum

At Chetham's we are primarily concerned with striking the right balance between the provision of a rounded education which will prepare you for Higher Education and the needs of your music specialism.

When deciding on your Sixth Form academic programme, you should consider your own academic profile, your instrumental commitments and your future. We look carefully at your choice of subjects and your general academic interests and balance this with your instrumental needs and commitments to find the right programme for you. You will want to discuss your plans with your parents/carers, and it may be helpful to ask advice of your subject teachers, your instrumental teacher and Head of Department or (for those of you already at Chetham's) your personal tutor.

There are 4 option blocks (see page 5) from which to make your choice of subjects. You will be expected to choose Music plus 2 subjects from Blocks 2-4; it may be possible to choose 3 if you feel 4 A levels is feasible. Only choices consistent with the blocking system can be considered; restrictions of time and resourcing mean that we are unable to offer you a completely free choice of options. Do not, therefore, choose more than one subject from each block. The exception to this is French and German; we may be able to consider dual linguists if you flag this on your option form. Please note also that whether a course goes ahead will depend on its viability in terms of numbers opting for it. We reserve the right to withdraw a course if take-up is minimal. However, this should not deter you in the first instance from applying for the combination of subjects which attracts you.

There are 5 hours teaching time per week assigned to each subject. In addition, you are expected to spend approximately 3-4 hours per subject per week on prep/private study.

The ALIS base-line test, for which no preparation is required, will be taken by all Year 12 during one timetabled academic lesson. This generates a Chances Graph which indicates likely attainment in your chosen subjects.

The Learning Support Department supports students with any specific learning difficulties and/or disabilities, those who have an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) and students with EAL (English as an Additional Language). Lessons are predominantly one-to-one or in small groups, with occasional in-class TA support, where required.

Enrichment

All students are encouraged to follow our Creative Engagement curriculum. In addition, PSHE topics will also be delivered to all Year 12; there will be an hour a fortnight and additional sessions throughout the year. Topics will include Money Matters, Alcohol, Drugs, Sexual Health and Relationships, Self-esteem, Effective learning and Resilience; and 'Soft Skills' (Communication and Problem-Solving) as well as Careers advice.

Making your choice

Ask yourself:

Which subjects do I enjoy?

Think whether you really want to study a subject for 5 hours per week for 2 years. Remember that you will also be expected to do a substantial amount of private study in each subject that you choose. It is therefore of prime importance that you opt for those which you think you will enjoy. Bear in mind that the content of a GCSE subject is not always a reliable indicator of what that subject will be like at A Level. Talk to any Sixth Formers you know who do the subjects you are considering and ask your teachers.

Should I have a minimum grade to do an A level

Some departments (e.g. MFL, Maths) require a minimum Grade 7 at GCSE to begin an A Level course, others may accept lower grades. Your GCSE predictions should give an idea of your ability, but there is strong evidence to show that a Grade 6 or lower indicates that only moderate success is likely at A Level. The best thing to do is to speak with your subject teacher, who will have a good idea of your aptitude for post-GCSE study.

You generally enjoy the subjects that you are good at and vice versa so choosing what you're best at can work but don't choose solely on this.

Can I choose a subject that I have not taken at GCSE?

Certain subjects (Mathematics, Foreign Languages, and Sciences) build upon the knowledge and skills gained at GCSE level. Other subjects may be more accessible to those who have not previously studied them; but the best advice is to find out exactly what the course entails in terms of skills and subject content and to discuss with relevant teachers.

What if I have failed some of my GCSEs?

Unlike most other Sixth Forms, we have no minimum entry requirement at Chetham's; you are here based on your musical ability. However, if you do not achieve at least a Grade 4 in English Language and Maths in Year 11 then you should re-take the GCSE in Year 12 as these are essential qualifications for future employment. You will be given help to do so.

How can I fit all this in?

Time is a rare commodity at Chetham's. We try very hard to establish a realistic balance between your musical and academic commitments and, ideally, they should be complementary and mutually supportive. If at any point you find you are struggling, see your personal tutor or me, Mr Leeson, for help and advice.

Ed Leeson

Head of Sixth Form / Head of Maths

March 2026

Option Blocks

You may choose one subject from each block but, if you have a problem doing so, please indicate a first and second choice on your Option Form.

Block 1 (compulsory)	Block 2	Block 3	Block 4
Music	Biology French German Music Technology Physics Theatre Studies	Art Chemistry Geography History Music Technology	English Language English Literature Mathematics Further Mathematics

(Further Mathematics may only be taken alongside Mathematics as a double A-level; please speak with Mr Leeson if you are interested in this opportunity.)

It may be possible to timetable French and German.

In addition to the above you are encouraged to spend some time following our Health and Fitness programme in the gym.

Managing your time:

Our timetable at Chetham's works on a 30 x 1 hour period week. Your timetabled hours in Year 12 will be allocated as follows (although there will be specific variations):

Music:	1st study instrumental lesson	1½ hours per week
	2nd study instrumental lesson	½ hour per week
	Choir and general musicianship	1 hour per week
	Music Block	2 hours per week

You will likely have a minimum of 2 hours per week of rehearsals spread across weekdays and Saturday mornings alongside practice as prescribed by department.

You will also have a Tutor period and / or Assembly on Monday morning.

Once you have considered your overall programme, please indicate your subject choices using the online Option Form link at the end of the handbook.

Art & Design

Head of Department: Mrs A Boothroyd

A Level - AQA (Art, Craft and Design)

The main purpose of the Art, Craft and Design course is for you to develop your ability to appreciate the visual world, responding in a personal and creative way. You will be able to develop personal responses to ideas, observations, experiences, environments and cultures in practical, critical and contextual forms.

This course will lay an appropriate foundation for any student who wishes to further study Art and Design or related subjects in Higher Education. In addition, it is suitable for the diverse range of you who wish to develop their interest in and enjoyment of Art and Design, fostering its value in lifelong learning. The best foundation for success in A Level Art is at least a good grade at GCSE Art and Design. This is not a requirement but is advisable. If you have an aptitude for the subject, are creative and good at drawing, you may have the basic skills required to succeed. Above all, you should have an interest in creating and understanding art and the determination to develop that interest.

Overarching knowledge, understanding and skills

You will be introduced to a variety of experiences that employ a range of traditional and new media, processes and techniques appropriate to the chosen areas of study. Knowledge of art, craft and design will be developed through research, the development of ideas, working from first-hand experience and, where appropriate, secondary source materials. You will be required to participate actively in your course of study, recognising and developing your own strengths in the subject and identifying and sustaining your own lines of enquiry.

The course will require you to develop practical and theoretical knowledge and understanding of:

- relevant materials, processes, technologies and resources;
- how ideas, feelings and meanings can be conveyed and interpreted in images and artefacts;
- how images and artefacts relate to the time and place in which they were made and to their social and cultural contexts;
- continuity and change in different genres, styles and traditions;
- a working vocabulary and specialist terminology.

The course will require you to develop the skills to:

- record experiences and observations, in a variety of ways using drawing or other appropriate visual forms; undertake research; and gather, select and organise visual and other appropriate information;
- explore relevant resources; analyse, discuss and evaluate images, objects and artefacts; and make and record independent judgements;
- use knowledge and understanding of the work of others to develop and extend thinking and inform own work;
- generate and explore potential lines of enquiry using appropriate media and techniques;
- apply knowledge and understanding in making images and artefacts; review and modify work; and plan and develop ideas in the light of their own and others' evaluations;
- organise, select and communicate ideas, solutions and responses, and present them in a range of visual, tactile and/or sensory forms.

Areas of study in Art, Craft and Design

You will take part in a broad-based course exploring practical and critical/contextual work through a range of 2D and/or 3D processes and media associated with two or more of the titles:

Fine art: drawing, painting, mixed-media, sculpture, installation, printmaking and photography.

Textile design: fashion design, fashion textiles, costume design, printed and/or dyed fabrics and materials, domestic textiles, wallpaper, interior design, constructed textiles, art textiles and installed textiles.

Three-dimensional design: sculpture, jewellery and body ornament.

Photography: portraiture, landscape photography, still life photography, documentary photography, multimedia, photographic installation.

The A Level is a two-year course. During the first year of the A Level, there will be an emphasis on the development of understanding and skills using an appropriate range of materials, processes and techniques. A selection of thoughtfully presented work that demonstrates the breadth and depth of the course of study will be required to undertake. You will produce work that demonstrates your ability to sustain work from an initial starting point to a realisation. You will also develop an ability to research and develop ideas and link your work in a meaningful way to relevant critical/contextual materials.

The A Level components are introduced and selected towards the end of the first year. At A Level, you are expected to demonstrate depth of study and skill. You will be made aware of the four assessment objectives to be demonstrated in the context of the content and skills presented. You will be aware of the importance of process as well as product.

The A Level course will consist of two components:

Component 1 Personal Investigation (60% of A Level)

This is a practical investigation supported by written material.

You are required to conduct a practical investigation into an idea, issue, concept or theme, supported by written material. The focus of the investigation must be identified independently by you and must lead to a finished outcome or a series of related finished outcomes.

The investigation should be a coherent, in-depth study that demonstrates your ability to construct and develop a sustained line of reasoning from an initial starting point to a final realisation. The practical element should make connections with some aspect of contemporary or past practice of artist(s), designer(s), photographers, or craftspeople and include written work of no less than 1000 and no more than 3000 words which support the practical work.

The investigation must show clear development from initial intentions to the final outcome or outcomes. It must include evidence of your ability to research and develop ideas and relate their work in meaningful ways to relevant critical/contextual materials.

Component 2 Externally Set Assignment (40% of A Level)

You respond to a stimulus, provided by AQA, to produce work which provides evidence of your ability to work independently within specified time constraints, developing a personal and meaningful response which addresses all the assessment objectives and leads to a finished outcome or a series of related finished outcomes.

Preparatory period – from 1 February

Following receipt of the paper you consider the starting points and select one. Preparatory work should be presented in any suitable format, such as mounted sheets, design sheets, sketchbooks, workbooks, journals, models and maquettes.

Supervised time – 15 hours

Following the preparatory period, you must complete 15 hours of unaided, supervised time.

Drama and Theatre Studies

Head of Department: Mrs J Sherlock

If you are considering taking Theatre Studies it is important that you are interested in gaining a greater understanding of how theatre and plays work and that you are keen to be involved with performances and prepared for the rigorous demands of a written paper. The course demands practical and theoretical skills in almost equal measure. You will be required to write analytically about drama and to develop your powers of analysis to become an informed critic. The concise writing technique you will be trained to use is an excellent acquisition in itself. The course will involve taking part in drama productions, as well as studying plays, playwrights and theatre practitioners.

This course can lead to further study in Drama, Theatre Studies and Arts related courses at degree level. It is a fully recognised and valued subject by all universities (including Oxbridge). It complements a wide variety of subjects and is useful in building confidence and improving presentation, communication and team work skills.

A Level Theatre Studies - Edexcel

Component 1: Devising

Coursework - 40% of the qualification

Content overview

- Devise an original performance piece
- Use one key extract from a performance text and a theatre practitioner as stimuli
- Centre choice of text and practitioner
- Performer or designer routes available

Assessment overview

- Internally assessed and externally moderated
- There are two parts to the assessment:
 - 1) a portfolio
 - 2) the devised performance/design realisation

Component 2: Text in Performance

Coursework - 20% of the qualification

Content overview

- A group performance/design realisation of one key extract from a performance text
- A monologue or duologue performance/design realisation from one key extract from a different performance text
- Centre choice of performance texts

Assessment overview

- Externally assessed by a visiting examiner
- Group performance
- Monologue or duologue

Component 3: Theatre Makers in Practice

Written examination - 40% of the qualification

Content overview

- Live theatre evaluation – choice of performance.
- Practical exploration and study of a complete performance text – focusing on how this can be realised for performance.

- Practical exploration and interpretation of another complete performance text, in light of a chosen theatre practitioner – focusing on how this text could be reimagined for a contemporary audience.

Assessment overview

Section A: Live Theatre Evaluation

Section B: Page to Stage: Realising a Performance Text

- You answer two extended response questions based on an unseen extract from the performance text they have studied

Section C: Interpreting a Performance Text

- You will answer one extended response question from a choice of two based on an unseen named section from their chosen performance text

English Language

Head of Department: Ms C Raffo
Staff: Mrs J Harrison
Mrs L Jones
Mrs Sanderson-Leigh

English Language

English Language focuses on how language is used in various contexts (advertisements, digital media, politics, news stories and everyday life), more specifically, how language is influenced by society, culture, gender, religion etc. Linguistic analysis is central to the course, but it also enables students to understand some elements of sociolinguistics – how language shapes identity and social attitudes. It develops students' skills in research, critical thinking, creativity and written communication, making it an attractive A Level for university applicants.

We offer the AQA specification, which comprises two exams and an NEA.

Paper 1: Language, the Individual and Society: 40%

Section A: Textual variations and representations.

This requires students to analyse two texts from two different eras which are thematically linked. It offers similarities to AQA paper 2 at GCSE level but far greater use of linguistic terminology is applied at A Level as well as knowledge of wider contexts.

Section B: Children's language development (0-11 years)

This unit explores how children develop language skills from birth through early childhood, exploring how social and cognitive factors influence the process. You will explore linguistic features - phonology, lexis, grammar – and apply various theories to transcripts of children's conversations with caregivers.

Paper 2: Language diversity and Change: 40%

This unit includes looking at aspects of language such as accent and dialect, cultural factors that influence attitudes towards language use, gendered language and how language reflects power dynamics in society.

The unit also explores World Englishes and its distinct varieties such as American English, Jamaican English, Multicultural London English; the roles of globalization, technological developments and language contact are explored in connection to shaping language and culture.

NEA (coursework): 20%

The coursework portfolio is made up of two pieces: a language investigation on a language topic of your choice and a piece of original writing as well as a commentary based on your original writing.

English Language A Level is a great subject for anyone interested in society as well as language as the modules touch on elements of psychology and sociology.

English Literature

Head of Department: Ms C Raffo
Staff: Mrs J Harrison
Mrs L Jones
Mrs Sanderson-Leigh

OCR A Level English Literature

English Literature at A level is a good choice for those who like reading, analysing and discussing works of poetry, prose or drama. It develops not only essay writing skills but also critical thinking and confidence in articulating your ideas, which is why it continues to be highly respected by universities. Successful students in English are prepared to read widely and think independently. The requirement to consider the contexts of works ensures diverse discussion of not just literature but society, philosophy, psychology and history.

For the A Level there are three components: two examined and one non-examined (coursework) component.

Component one: 40% Shakespeare and Poetry and Drama pre-1900

The key text for this unit is currently *The Tempest*. This unit requires you to respond to an extract from the play, followed by a whole text essay which considers the different interpretations of the play over time (through the lens of post-colonialism, feminism etc.,). For the second half of the paper you will study a selection of poems by Christina Rossetti and these will be examined in an essay which asks you to compare this poetry with Ibsen's play, *A Doll's House*. The contextual backdrop of the Victorian era and key themes of love, marriage, power and injustice tie these two texts together.

Component two: 40% Comparative and contextual study

Our current topic choice for this component is dystopia, and we study the two key texts which are Orwell's *Nineteen Eighty-Four* and Atwood's *The Handmaid's Tale*.

You will also explore a variety of extracts from the dystopian genre in preparation for an unseen extract analysis.

Connections across the texts and an understanding of their differing sociohistorical contexts will form the basis of essay responses, underpinned with some theory (e.g. Foucault's theory of disciplinary power).

NEA (coursework) 20%

There are two pieces of written coursework which results in 3000 words in total.

The first involves studying a collection of poetry (currently this is *The Toll* by Luke Wright) and writing a close critical analysis of one poem - 1000 words

The second involves studying a whole prose text alongside a play (currently this is Williams' *A Streetcar Named Desire* & McEwan's *Enduring Love*) and writing a comparative response based on a specific theme e.g. masculinity, deceit, betrayal -2000 words.

OCR recommends that you have a grade 7 at GCSE if you choose this A Level but a willingness to read and discuss are also very important.

Geography

Head of Department: Mr A Kyle
Staff: Ms R Booth

OCR A Level Geography

A Level Geography is viewed as one of the key 'facilitating' subjects. As such, it is an excellent A Level for students wishing to apply for academic higher education courses, or indeed, for students pursuing a music career who want to be well rounded in terms of discursive writing, independent research, and numerical and analytical skills.

The OCR A Level Geography course will be delivered over two years culminating in a series of linear examinations at the end of Year 13. The OCR specification offers candidates exciting content studied through a choice of topics giving rich learning opportunities. Much of the material focuses on contemporary challenges of the 21st century allowing you to develop a deep understanding of present-day issues. There are also opportunities for learners to gain vital geographical, fieldwork and life skills through the independent investigation.

Content Overview

The Physical Systems and Human Interactions topics will be taught in Year 12. Year 13 will focus on the Geographical Debates content and the Independent Investigation and will offer a more synoptic approach allowing you to make connections across the topics studied in both years.

Physical Systems

- Coastal Landscapes – the physical geography of coastal environments and the influence of human activity upon them
- Earth's Life Support Systems – the water and carbon cycles, their interconnectivity and their influence on contrasting environments and over different timescales

Human Interactions

- Global Connections – a study of two current global issues; choices include Trade/Migration ('Global Systems') and Human Rights/Power and Borders ('Global Governance').
- Changing Spaces and Making Places – a local/ regional focus on what gives people a 'sense of place' and why places change over time.

Geographical Debates

You study two of the following five topics:

- Climate Change
- Disease Dilemmas
- Exploring Oceans
- Future of Food
- Hazardous Earth

Investigative Geography

Investigative geography gives learners the opportunity to undertake an independent investigation which is of particular interest to them, which can be related to any area of the specification. The Independent Investigation will consist of a written report (3000-4000 words) which will assess the process of enquiry and investigation. The report must be an independent investigation but data collection can be conducted within a group.

Fieldwork is an essential requirement of A Level Geography specifications and all students must undertake four days of fieldwork over the course of the qualification. It is envisaged that we will undertake the fieldwork as a group and that we will use the end of Year 12 to carry out a residential fieldtrip; past locations for residential trips have included North Yorkshire, Wales and Iceland.

Assessment Overview

Physical Systems 72 marks 1 hour 45 minute written paper	24% of total A level
Human Interactions 72 marks 1 hour 45 minute written paper	24% of total A level
Geographical Debates 96 marks 2 hours 30 minute written paper	32% of total A level
Investigative Geography 60 marks Non-examination assessment (NEA) – assessed by teacher and moderated by the OCR	20% of total A level

History

Head of Humanities: Mr A Kyle
Staff: Mrs S Cox

History enables you to consider causes and effects of key events in the past which have shaped today's world.

Candidates taking A Level History will be examined on The Tudors, 1485-1603; The Cold War, c.1945 - 1991; and will complete a Non-Exam Assessment (coursework).

A Level – AQA Specification

Component 1: Breadth Study - The Tudors: England, 1485–1603

This option allows you to study in breadth issues of change, continuity, cause and consequence in this period through the following key questions:

- How effectively did the Tudors restore and develop the powers of the monarchy?
- In what ways and how effectively was England governed during this period?
- How did relations with foreign powers change and how was the succession secured?
- How did English society and economy change and with what effects?
- How far did intellectual and religious ideas change and develop and with what effects?
- How important was the role of key individuals and groups and how were they affected by developments?

Component 2: Depth Study - The Cold War c.1945 - 1991

This option provides for the in depth study of the evolving course of international relations during an era of tension between communist and capitalist powers which threatened nuclear Armageddon. It explores concepts such as communism and anti-communism, aggression and détente and also encourages you to reflect on the power of modern military technology, what hastens confrontation and what forces promote peace in the modern world. Key points include the post-war agreements, the Berlin Wall, the Cuban Missile Crisis etc.

Your knowledge and understanding will be tested through essay-writing and source questions.

Component 3: Non-Exam Assessment

You identify an issue you wish to study in reference to France in the years c.1814 to 1914, then develop a question which will be the focus of the assessment. In addition to producing a detailed answer to your question, the NEA tests your ability to use sources and to understand the influences that affect historians writing about that period.

Assessment:

- Written exam: component 1
2.5 hours
80 marks
40% of A Level
- Written exam: component 2
2.5 hours
80 marks
40% of A Level
- NEA: component 3
4,500 words (max)
40 marks
20% of A Level
Marked by teachers, moderated by AQA

Mathematics

Head of Department: Mr E Leeson
Staff: Dr A Clow
Ms C Dackombe

A Level – Edexcel

Mathematics at A Level is a valuable subject for any student and often serves as a very useful support for many other qualifications such as science and engineering. It is a sought-after qualification for the workplace and courses in Higher Education. It is challenging but interesting, building on work met at GCSE, but also involving many new ideas.

The course aims to allow and encourage the development of:

- Mathematical skills and knowledge to solve problems, given in both theoretical and real-life context
- Use of Mathematical arguments and logic
- Understanding and demonstration of what is meant by proof in Mathematics
- Simplifying real-life situations and using Mathematics to explain what is happening
- Use of calculators, computers and other resources effectively and appropriately

Requirements

A minimum of a grade 7 in the higher tier of GCSE Mathematics is needed for the course.

A Level Mathematics

This is a two year linear course. You will study two thirds Pure Maths content and one third applied topics; Statistics and Mechanics. In studying the Pure content, knowledge of algebra and trigonometry will be extended as well as the introduction of new concepts such as calculus. From the Statistics and Mechanics unit knowledge of data analysis and probability will be extended with the use of large data sets, as well as introducing statistical distributions such as the binomial distribution. You will also cover kinematics and learn how to describe Mathematically the motion of objects and how they respond to the forces acting upon them. All three exam papers are sat at the end of Year 13.

A Level Further Mathematics (Double A Level)

This course is only suitable for students who are very able and have a deep interest in the subject (a grade 8 at GCSE is required for Further Maths). It is especially desirable if you considering taking a degree in either Maths or a Mathematically related subject such as Engineering, Physics or Computer Science. Students following this course will study the A Level Mathematics, as detailed above. Alongside the A Level schedule, you will have additional lessons for a further four units; two compulsory Pure and two optional units (Pure or Applied). The examinations sat at the end of Year 13 will lead to an A Level qualification in Further Mathematics. The demands of sitting two A Levels in Maths simultaneously in Year 13 are high. End of Year 12 school exam results may therefore require you to reduce to single award Maths.

Modern Languages

Head of Department:	Ms N Geschwendt (German)
Staff:	Mr P Chillingworth (French)
	Mr M Jacobs (French)
	Mrs R Jordan (German)
	Mrs C Law (German Language Assistant)
	Mr A Vonroschach (French Language Assistant)

Why study a foreign language?

In terms of employment prospects, the ability to speak a foreign language is becoming increasingly advantageous. In almost any profession, a facility with at least one other major European language is a vital asset and, most particularly in the world of the professional musician, where the concept of the 'global village' is a very real one, ability to communicate verbally as well as musically is an invaluable skill. Moreover, the study of a foreign language beyond GCSE gives a deeper understanding of the history, culture and traditions of the country concerned and will offer invaluable insight into the minds of the great European composers and the development of music in Europe.

Our A Level courses also aim to develop your powers of analysis, ability to structure arguments effectively and knowledge of current affairs.

Aims and structure of the courses

The A Level language courses build upon the skills acquired for GCSE, seeking to deepen understanding of the structures of the languages as well as dealing with the social, political and cultural issues affecting much of modern Europe.

The foreign language is used as much as possible in the classroom and you should aim to spend some time during the course in the country where the language is spoken. Popular and tailor-made five-day study trips to Berlin and Paris are offered in the Sixth Form in February Half Term, giving you the chance to explore many of the set A Level topics for German and French.

Lessons continue to combine and further the four basic language skills of listening, speaking, reading and writing, with greater emphasis on grammatical accuracy than at GCSE, and using authentic materials in the form of foreign-language websites, DVDs, news broadcasts and both adult and teenage literature. The culture of Germany, France and other countries where these are spoken will also be looked at in greater depth.

A Level course structure (Awarding Body: AQA)

Not all topics will feature in each language.

Year 12

- Aspects of German/French speaking society: current trends
- The changing structure of the family; the impact of digital technology; the role of charities and voluntary work; youth culture.
- Artistic culture in the German/French-speaking world
- Festivals and traditions; Art and Architecture; Berlin/Paris; Contemporary Music; Cinema.
- Grammar and translation
- Study of a film
- Independent research topic (examined in the speaking test)
- An independently researched topic of your choice, perhaps an author, musician, director, or an aspect of German or French speaking society not covered elsewhere in the course.

Year 13

- Aspects of German/French speaking society: current issues
- Multiculturalism: immigration, integration, racism; Social exclusion; Crime and punishment.
- Aspects of political life in the German/French-speaking world
- Youth and political engagement; the role of trade unions; immigration policy; the EU; German reunification and its consequences.
- Grammar and translation
- Study of a text (book/play)
- Independent research topic (examined in the speaking test)
- An independently researched topic of your choice, perhaps an author, musician, director, or an aspect of German or French speaking society not covered elsewhere in the course.

The exam structure is as follows:

Paper 1: Listening, Reading and Writing (2h30) (50% of total marks)

- Listening comprehension: you have an individual mp3 file or CD which they can control.
- Reading comprehension.
- Translation into and out of the language.

Paper 2: Writing (2h) (20% of total marks)

- One essay question on the film studied in Year 12 and one on the text in Year 13, answered in German or French. No texts or dictionaries are allowed in the exam. All questions will require a critical appreciation of the concepts and issues covered in the work and a critical and analytical response to features such as the form and the technique of presentation, as appropriate to the work studied (e.g. the effect of narrative voice in a prose text or camera work in a film).

Paper 3: Speaking (21-23m including 5m preparation) (30% of total marks)

- Discussion of one of the topics covered during the course based on a stimulus card, prepared beforehand (5-6m).
- Presentation (2 minutes) and discussion (9-10 minutes) of the individual research project.

Course Requirements

Students who decide to embark on the study of languages in the Sixth Form need to be realistic. The study of languages post-16 is rewarding and stimulating, but also demanding, and it represents a significant jump from the 'survival' language situations of GCSE courses. There is a strong emphasis placed on grammatical structure and accuracy, and dictionaries will not be allowed in the examinations. You must therefore be prepared to spend time acquiring breadth and depth of vocabulary, and also developing and applying the grammatical concepts that become an increasingly important part of language-learning post-16.

Anyone embarking upon an A Level course should have achieved Grade A or A* at GCSE and, given the oral nature of the course, should show a willingness to speak in class and offer opinions, and an awareness of the moral, ethical, social problems facing us today. A willingness to spend time independently in the country concerned is also very important. In addition to lessons, you will be expected to spend a minimum of 5 hours a week on independent study i.e. fostering their reading and listening skills, researching vocabulary and writing in French or German, as well as attending small-group sessions with the language assistant.

Students who are considering opting for a language at A Level but are unsure of their suitability or ability, should not hesitate to speak to their subject-teacher: (s)he is in the best position to give sound advice.

Music

Head of Music in the Curriculum:	Dr S King
Coordinator of Sixth Form Academic Music:	Dr S Oliver
Coordinator of Lower School Academic Music:	Ms A Price
Staff:	Miss R Aldred
	Miss E Black
	Mr D Mason
	Dr S Murphy

A Level - AQA

All students in the Sixth Form receive class music tuition as an extension of and support for their instrumental work. This leads to an A Level examination in Music at the end of Year 13.

Year 12

Academic Music lessons in Year 12 are designed with three aims:

- to enhance and support your instrumental study
- to lay a foundation for composition coursework undertaken in Year 13
- to cover approximately half of the A Level Music Areas of Study

Classes are normally arranged as follows:

- 3 hours per week in a set of 10-12 students, focusing on Listening, History and Analysis
- 1 hour per week in a smaller group of 5-6 students focusing on Composing skills
- 1 hour per week as the whole Year 12 group focusing on Aural and Choir work

You will normally work with the same set teacher throughout Year 12 for all aspects of the course. Division into teaching groups will be based on your needs in the area of aural training – this setting is reviewed after each significant assessment. In the Spring and Summer terms, the classes may be rearranged to facilitate optional choices of Areas of Study.

Term 1

Compulsory Area of Study 1(a): Baroque Solo Concerto

Set works by Purcell, Vivaldi and Bach

Terms 2-3

Compulsory Area of Study 1(b): The Operas of Mozart

Set work: *Le nozze di Figaro*, Act I

Optional areas of Study (choose one):

Pop Music Stevie Wonder, Joni Mitchell, Muse, Daft Punk, Beyoncé, Labrinth

Music for Media Bernard Hermann, Thomas Newman, Hans Zimmer, Michael Giacchino, Nobuo Uematsu

Music for Theatre Kurt Weill, Richard Rodgers, Stephen Sondheim, Claude-Michel Schönberg, Jason Robert Brown

Jazz Louis Armstrong, Duke Ellington, Charlie Parker, Miles Davis, Pat Metheny, Gwilym Simcock

Contemporary Traditional Music Astor Piazzolla, Toumani Diabaté, Anoushka Shankar, Mariza, Bellowhead

Art Music Post-1910 Shostakovich, Messiaen, Steve Reich, James MacMillan

In addition to the regular classes described above, the Department offers classes:

- for students requiring help in preparing for ABRSM's Grade 5 Theory
- for students with English as an additional language
- for students considering applying to study Music at university (Summer term in Y12 and Autumn term in Y13)

Year 13

All students proceed to the A Level examination in Music during Year 13, except for those who took this exam in Year 12. The aims and objectives of the course in Year 13 remain consistent with those in Year 12, with particular focus on support for you during the first term, as they prepare for auditions to enter Conservatoires, or for application to Universities.

Lessons are organised as follows:

- 3 hours per week in a set of 10-12 students, focusing on Listening, History and Analysis, covering work for Unit 1 of the A Level specification
- 1 hour per week in a smaller group of 5-6 students, focusing on Composing skills, both free and stylistic, for Unit 3 of A the A Level
- 1 hour per week as the whole Y13 group focusing initially on Choir work and including other targeted skills as appropriate later in the course

The A Level examination is taken in Year 13 and consist of:

- A written examination, testing aural skills, analytical knowledge of set works, contextual and analytical knowledge of Areas of Study (40% of total marks)
- Non-Exam Assessment of Performance (35% of total marks, externally marked)
- A single performance of at least 10 minutes
- Non-Exam Assessment of Composition – minimum total 4.5 minutes (25% of total marks, externally marked)
One composition to a brief published by the exam board
One free composition

Terms 1-2

Compulsory Area of Study 1(c): Nineteenth Century Piano Music

Set works by Chopin, Brahms and Grieg

Optional areas of study (choose one from options as per Y12, Term 3)

Term 3

Revision

Post-A Level work

Students who have already completed A Level studies before entering Year 13 attend 2 hours of lessons each week, as a full class.

Since 2009-10, post-A Level classes have been able to follow a course in preparation for entering the Trinity Guildhall AMusTCL diploma in Music Theory. Entry for the examination is optional; however, it is felt that the opportunity for sharply focussed further study with a significant qualification as the goal makes this an attractive option. The syllabus is interesting and imaginative, with a good balance of stylistic composition, analysis and historical/stylistic contextual work and a wide range of genres which would appeal to Chetham's students.

- According to the syllabus, the AMusTCL "is a written diploma in which the standard is equivalent to the written-work component at the end of the first year in a full-time undergraduate course at a conservatoire or other higher education institution." There are no prerequisites in terms of qualifications for beginning study for the examination.

- The examination consists of a single 3-hour paper, marked out of 100, with a pass mark of 60%. The paper is divided into two sections (5 questions to be attempted in total, at least 1 from each section):
 - Section A: Musical Skills (melody, harmony, counterpoint, orchestration) exercises from 4 different periods/styles
 - Section B: Prescribed Works (5 works from 4 different musical periods) either an essay, or a series of sub-questions
- N.B. there is no coursework involved.

Music Technology

Head of Department: Dr S King
Staff: Mr A Horn
Dr J Pike

A Level – Edexcel

The **A Level Music Technology** course guides you through the theoretical understanding, analysis and evaluation of production techniques from the early 1900s to modern day. You will also develop practical skills involving the production of audio recordings, and the creation of music through the use of sequencing techniques, audio manipulation, creative audio effects and sound design.

Some of the areas we will be covering include:

- **Sound Waves**
- **Synthesis**
- **Microphones**
- **History and Development of Recording Technology**
- **Digital Audio Workstations**
- **Audio Effects & Processing**
- **Modern Recording methods**
- **Electronic instruments**

Through these subject areas, Music Technology covers a range of S.T.E.A.M. principles.

- **Science:** Acoustics; Psychoacoustics; Physical Properties.
- **Technology:** Computer Skills; Controlling Data; Programming; Electronics.
- **Engineering:** Problem Solving; Interfacing; Testing; Programming.
- **Art:** Creative thinking; Conceptualising; Composition.
- **Maths:** Equations; Analysing Data; Patterns; Binary.

Who is the course for?

The A Level Music Technology course is an option for anyone in Year 12/Year 13 however, as the course involves a degree of scientific analysis, a good pass at GCSE Maths is required. Good GCSE Science grades would also be helpful.

You should have an interest in technology, sound recording and the more contemporary styles of music, alongside an affinity for computers and problem-solving. Previous experience of creating music in a Digital Audio Workstation such as LogicPro X, GarageBand, Cubase or Ableton would be of great benefit.

The course may also be of interest to our composition students who wish to experiment using technology within their composing work.

Career Paths

Studying Music Technology can be a starting point into a number of audio-based careers. Our alumni have gone on to further music technology related studies at institutes including Berklee School of Music, Liverpool Institute for Performing Arts and London College of Music. This has led to careers including:

- **Post Production & Audio Mastering specialist**
- **Recording Engineer**
- **Dialogue and Audio Restoration**

- Sound Design (Film + Video Games)
- Dialogue Editor (Film)
- Composer (Video Games)
- Award winning Electronic Music Artist
- Product Manager for audio plug-in manufacturers
- Record Producer
- Record Label Founder/Owner

The A Level examination is taken in Year 13 and consists of:

Externally Assessed Coursework: Multi-track Recording - 20%

Using our recording studios, you will have to record, edit and mix a piece of popular music from a choice of ten artists given by the exam board. The recording will have to fulfil several criteria set by the board including its length and the choice of instruments that must be on the recording. You will oversee the entire process.

Externally Assessed Coursework: Technology-based Composition - 20%

For this piece of coursework you will have to compose and realise a piece of music using music technology as a key element of the music to a brief set by the board. Technology must play a large part of the compositional process, including the use of synthesis and sample editing for sound creation, and the creative use of audio effects.

Written Exam: Listening and Analysing – 1hr30mins - 25%

In this exam you are given several unfamiliar commercial pop recordings from 1940 to modern day. In a series of written response, they will be asked to identify, analyse and evaluate a range of creative music production techniques found within the recordings, including recording methods, the identification of audio effects and their related parameters, and the principles behind the choice of the effects heard and their sonic character.

Written/Practical Exam: Producing and Analysing – 2hr15mins - 35%

This exam assesses your knowledge of the techniques and principles of music technology through a series of written and practical tasks, in the context of audio and MIDI materials provided by the exam board. Using a Digital Audio Workstation, you will work with unedited audio and MIDI materials that have been captured using microphone, DI and sequencing techniques. It will assess the ability to process and correct these materials using a range of production skills, culminating in a series of audio bounces/exports for individual instrumental/vocal parts. You will refine and combine the pre-existing 'ingredients' of a mix to form a convincing final stereo mix.

Please note: Places on the course may be limited therefore you may be required to demonstrate a genuine enthusiasm for the subject before being accepted.

Sciences

Head of Department:	Mr A Henderson (Biology)
Staff:	Mr J Blundell (Physics)
	Mr C Davidson (Physics/General Sciences)
	Mrs C Shiells (Chemistry)
	Ms E Storey (Biology/Sciences)

A Level – AQA

At A Level, all subjects follow the AQA specification. All three subjects are examined by three written papers at the end of Year 13, all of which are of 2 hours' duration.

Biology

The subject content is relevant to real world experiences and is interesting to learn. It is also presented in a straightforward way. A Level Biology is a stepping stone to future study in courses like biological sciences and medicine.

Biology is fundamentally an experimental subject. This specification provides numerous opportunities to use practical experiences to link theory to reality and equip you with the essential practical skills they need. Eight topic areas are covered, with the first four being studied in Year 12 and the last four in Year 13.

Subject content

1. Biological molecules
2. Cells
3. Organisms exchange substances with their environment
4. Genetic information, variation and relationships between organisms
5. Energy transfers in and between organisms
6. Organisms respond to changes in their internal and external environments
7. Genetics, populations, evolution and ecosystems
8. The control of gene expression

Chemistry

The AQA Chemistry specification can act as a steppingstone to inspire you, nurture your passion for chemistry and lay the groundwork for further study in courses such as chemistry, medicine and pharmacy. Chemistry is fundamentally an experimental subject. This course provides numerous opportunities to use practical experiences to link theory to reality and equip you with the essential practical skills they need.

Subject content

Physical chemistry

Atomic structure, Amount of substance, Bonding, Energetics, Kinetics, Chemical equilibria and Le Chatelier's principle and K_c , Oxidation, reduction and redox equations, Thermodynamics, Rate equations, Equilibrium constant K_p for homogeneous systems, Electrode potentials and electrochemical cells, Acids and bases

Inorganic chemistry

Periodicity, Group 2, the alkaline earth metals, Group 7(17), the halogens, Properties of Period 3 elements and their oxides, Transition metals, Reactions of ions in aqueous solution

Organic chemistry

Introduction to organic chemistry, Alkanes, Halogenoalkanes, Alkenes, Alcohols, Organic analysis, Optical isomerism, Aldehydes and ketones, Carboxylic acids and derivatives, Aromatic chemistry, Amines, Polymers, Amino acids, proteins and DNA, Organic synthesis, Nuclear magnetic resonance spectroscopy, Chromatography

Physics

One definition of physics is “the study of matter, energy, and the interaction between them”. Essentially it’s looking at the fundamental properties and behaviours of the universe on a scale from the infinitesimal – the sub-atomic world of quarks - to a scale that is immense – supercluster complexes of galaxies, the largest of which spans 10% of the observable universe.

While physics research is associated with the big questions – the origin of the universe / the role of dark matter and dark energy in its fate - it doesn’t just deal with theoretical concepts. Physics knowledge is applied in fields as diverse as astronomy, civil engineering, finance, medicine and nanotechnology.

The AQA specification has been designed to help inspire and motivate you and lay the foundations for higher level study at university. It offers numerous opportunities for you to develop their practical skills.

We strongly recommend that students choosing A-level Physics also study A-level Mathematics, as our experience shows that students without a good level of Mathematical skill can find the course extremely challenging.

In Y13, students currently study the Astrophysics option.

Subject content

Core content

- 1 Measurements and their errors
- 2 Particles and radiation
- 3 Waves
- 4 Mechanics and materials
- 5 Electricity
- 6 Further mechanics and thermal physics
- 7 Fields and their consequences
- 8 Nuclear physics

Options

- 9 Astrophysics
- 10 Medical physics
- 11 Engineering physics
- 12 Turning points in physics
- 13 Electronics

OPTION FORM

PLEASE SUBMIT THIS FORM NO LATER THAN SATURDAY 25 APRIL 2026

[A-level options form - Chetham's School of Music - Sixth Form – Fill in form](#)



Higher Education

University and music college applications are made in the Autumn Term of Year 13 either for entry immediately in September/October of the following year or, rarely, for deferred entry after a gap year. These applications are administered by UCAS (University and Colleges Admissions Service).

Entry to Music College is decided primarily by audition and a place, once offered, is usually dependent upon at least 2 A Level passes.

Entry to university will depend upon GCSE and A Level results, but an offer will usually be conditional upon certain other criteria, e.g. specific grades in certain subjects or a certain number of accumulated points. Different universities are looking for different qualities in applicants; some put more value in those who can demonstrate a broad range of achievement, i.e. those who have evidence of a range of interests and skills and who show commitment to extra-curricular activities in addition to their academic studies.

You should inform yourself about Careers and university/college entrance before making your A Level choices: visit the Careers section of the Learning Resource Centre, talk to your subject teachers and your instrumental teachers, and, for specific advice and guidance, seek out Dr Murphy (music college entry) and Mrs Harrison (university entry).

Applicants for Higher Education should note that they must meet certain conditions to qualify for 'home' student fee status. If you think you might be classified as an 'overseas' student, you should check the details on www.studentfinance.direct.gov.uk.