

6form

**college
solihull**

SPECIALIST ACADEMIES GUIDE 2017



Contents

Specialist Academies Explained	2
Extended Project	3
Stretch & Challenge Programme	4
Academies and Projects:	
Accounting & Finance Academy	5
Business Academy	6
Engineering Academy	7
European Languages Centre	8
Humanities Academy	9
Law Academy	10
Performing Arts Academy	11
Pre-Medical School	12
Psychology Research School	13
Shakespeare Academy	14
Social Sciences Academy	15
Teaching Academy	16
Wider Medical Academy	17
Career Passport	18
Other Enrichments	19
Why Enrichment Matters	20

Specialist Academies Explained

Specialist Academies are enrichment options linked to particular subjects or careers. They provide students with opportunities to develop their learning through a programme of seminars, guest lectures and visits out of College.

They may not include scheduled lessons every week and students won't be set homework, but the experiences students get from joining will boost later applications to university or employment.

In some cases, students may be able to get extra UCAS points for their university application by undertaking a piece of personal research in the form of an Extended Project Qualification (EPQ). Those academies with an EPQ element included are marked with an EPQ symbol (right).



Students must be aware that spaces on these Specialist Academies are limited and applying does not guarantee a place. In most cases, there will be a competitive selection process and students will need to demonstrate why they should get one of the places. A clear commitment to that area of study - including an ambition to continue studying it at university - will help.



Extended Project Qualification (EPQ)



Course description: The EPQ is a piece of independent work of a student's choice, which can either be an artefact or an extended piece of academic writing. The focus is on research and planning skills leading to a final piece. There are a number of specialist routes available including through one of the subject academies. Students are encouraged to be creative and innovative. The work completed cannot be connected to any aspect of AS or A2 work. This is assessed at A level standard and as such an A* is achievable. It boosts university and employment applications.



Course duration: January in Year 12 - December in Year 13

Time commitment: 1 period per week

Course costs: None.

Who can sign up: All students.

How and when to sign up: When you attend your enrolment interview in August you will be able to add the EPQ to your other subjects. There will be some short talks during the first term to give you more information about the EPQ before lessons start.

Stretch & Challenge Programme

Course description: The Stretch & Challenge Programme offers:

- extensive support and guidance for UCAS applications to Russell Group universities, especially for highly competitive courses such as Medicine, Law etc.
- preparation for university tests and interviews.
- support with personal statements.
- a place on the Stretch & Challenge Summer School in June.
- extension work opportunities.
- access to Moodle website with links, activities and aptitude tests which will strengthen applications to university.
- a specific programme for those students considering applying to Oxford or Cambridge.

Course duration: March of Year 12 - end of Year 13

Time commitment: 2 days Summer School in June of Year 12 and attendance at meetings as required.

Course costs: None.

Who can sign up: Students usually have a very good GCSE profile of strong passes and also:

- have an enthusiasm and interest in their subject and other academic pursuits.
- be proactive and independent.
- have the desire to seek out wider reading and research opportunities.
- take part in some sort of extracurricular activity – this could be the Extended Project Qualification or wider reading or work experience.

How and when to sign up: Students with a strong GCSE profile are invited to a meeting to address the key commitments of the programme. Teachers are also asked to nominate any other students who they feel are excelling in their subject area. Interested students then sign up via Moodle.



Accounting & Finance Academy

Course description: This is an exciting opportunity for students to develop their employability skills through a vocational academy. Students will be required to undertake research skills into Accounting and Finance careers and develop employability skills through participation in work experience opportunities, career insight days and masterclasses with local employers and universities.



Course duration: Mid Autumn Term to the end of Year 12. For students planning to apply for College Leaver Programmes and apprenticeships with employers this will continue through Year 13.

Time commitment: Includes after College commitment; varies from week to week.

Course costs: There may possibly be some local transport costs.

Who can sign up: Students who have an interest in a career in Accountancy or Finance after A levels/BTEC or after a degree course; through employers college leaver schemes /apprenticeships, sponsored degrees or degree study at university level and are keen to develop knowledge of these areas and employability skills. Students may be studying a range of A levels or any BTEC course. The key factor is an interest in a career in Accountancy or Finance.

How and when to sign up: Most students will sign up for this vocational academy in November of Year 12, although it may be possible to join later in the year.

In the past, students have progressed onto the following organisations:



Business Academy

Course description: The Business Academy will give students the opportunity to attend masterclasses at Russell Group Universities covering a variety of subject related topics. There will also be the chance to attend the Access to Professions Conference and taster days at University of Birmingham and Aston University. Visits will also be arranged to relevant places of interest. This year, Business Academy students attended visits to HSBC headquarters in Birmingham and also Innocent Smoothies HQ in London. Additionally, in



collaboration with the Accounting and Finance Academy, students will get the chance to attend employer events from Paragon Finance and Phoenix Group. There will be an opportunity to complete an Extended Project Qualification (EPQ).

Course duration: November - March

Time commitment: There is no specific time commitment as this will depend on the number of events opportunities students decide to access and attend themselves. There is likely to be a full day's visit centrally arranged which would require time out of lessons.



Course costs: Students will incur their own transport costs to events. Normally these are free to attend. Centrally arranged trips will incur transport and admission fees if appropriate.

Who can sign up: Year 12 A level Business students.

How and when to sign up: At enrolment and during the first half term of the year.

Engineering Academy

Course description: The Engineering Academy is for students who are interested in a career in Engineering or wish to experience the different types of Engineering available. Working in conjunction with Coventry University you will get hands on experience of working on real Engineering projects for example by designing and building a relief shelter. You will learn about different types of Engineering, the materials Engineers use



and gain valuable transferrable skills such as team work and project management. You will also work with an international company on a specific project which you will present to the company's chief engineers at their offices. In addition there are a number of trips and visits to see Engineering in action such as a trip to the Jaguar Land Rover Plant. Some students will also take part in the summer visit to CERN in Switzerland. Students who have previously enrolled in the Academy have been able to secure work placements at engineering firms.

Course duration: October 2017 to July 2018.

Time commitment: Most Wednesday afternoons in the Autumn term for work with Coventry University. Other half-days for trips and visits in the Spring and Summer terms. Three full days in the summer term for those students going on the CERN trip.

Course costs: The total travel costs to Coventry University will be approximately £40-£50. The CERN trip is limited to 20 places and costs approximately £450 (2017 prices).

Who can sign up: Any student interested in a career in Engineering who is studying A level Maths.

How and when to sign up: Places on the Academy are limited to 30 students. Students should request a place at their enrolment interview. If places are over-subscribed, names will be pulled out of a hat and students will be notified via Tyber.

European Languages Centre

Course description: All Modern Foreign Language students are automatically part of the Languages Centre. Students complete guided study and conversation, as well as taking part on a number of trips and visits. Pictured right are recent German students on their exchange trip with partner school, Albert-Einstein-Schule in Schwalbach, near Frankfurt.

Course duration: All year

Time commitment: It will vary from week to week

Course costs: The optional trips and visits (including those abroad) do incur travel costs, which vary from trip to trip.

Who can sign up: Only Modern Foreign Language students

How and when to sign up: No need to sign up; all Modern Foreign Language students will be automatically enrolled to this.



Humanities Academy



Course description: This is a specialist enrichment activity which supports students interested in applying for a Humanities-related course at university, or employment in a related industry, to deepen and broaden their experience of Humanities by working with national universities. The Academy has links with Salford, Nottingham and Leicester Universities that will support and guide the students projects. The projects will be ideal material for an Extended Project Qualification (EPQ) and students will be encouraged to create an EPQ that will support their career and university progression routes.

Course duration: Mid-Autumn term to the end of Year 12

Time commitment: Some after College commitment; varies from week to week.

Course costs: Possible charges for trips and visits, but this will vary from year to year.



Who can sign up: Any very enthusiastic Humanities student, with ambitions to study their Humanities subject/s or a new Humanities area subject such as Philosophy, Archaeology, Anthropology or Egyptology at University.

How and when to sign up: Year 12 Humanities students will have the opportunity to complete the Moodle application form in September 2017. There are only 15 places available.



Law Academy

Course description: Members of the Law Academy will have the opportunity to attend masterclasses at leading Russell Group Universities on topics such as assisted dying and the death penalty as well as participating in the 'How to get to the Bar' Law conference at St Philips' Chambers working



with judges and lawyers. They will have the chance to participate in a Mooting competition at Wolverhampton University and a summer school at the University of Law. Trips and visits to relevant places of interest such as the Supreme Court, the Magistrates' Court and the Court of Appeal are also included as well as guest speakers, including solicitors, barristers and former students.

Course duration: October - July

Time commitment: Variable

Course costs: There may possibly be some local transport costs.

Who can sign up: Year 12 Law students

How and when to sign up: Students will be given the chance to sign up via Law lessons.



Performing Arts Academy

Course description: This is a year-long course for students to develop their acting and performance skills. The workshops cover a range of areas which include audition technique for vocational HE and University courses, vocal technique, dance skills for actors and storytelling ensemble work. The Performing Arts Academy also works on smaller performances for College showcases.

Course duration: September-July
Time commitment: The course takes place with sessions twice a week during the College day. There may be some after College rehearsals needed close to the showcase dates.

Course costs: None.

Who can sign up: The course is open to any students from the College and is especially well suited to students seeking to progress to competitive HE courses in the Performing Arts.

How and when to sign up: Students sign up in September; no audition required.



Pre-Medical School



Course description: The Pre-Medical school is an enrichment activity designed to support students who have serious and realistic aspirations to study medicine at university. Through a series of lectures, visits and practical activities, students will strengthen their understanding of the medical profession and develop a greater appreciation of the essential skills and relevant experience required for a successful university application.



Activities undertaken as part of this academy include:

- University masterclasses
 - Visiting speakers from universities eg. Leicester, Keele and Birmingham
 - Input from the college careers adviser
 - Attendance at University of Birmingham Christmas Medical Lectures
 - Problem-based learning activity with Keele University
- Radiotherapy day at University of Liverpool
 - Day of hands-on practical activities at Keele University
 - Visit to hospital laboratory
 - BMAT and UKCAT preparation
 - Advice on the application process and an opportunity to question a medical student – University of Birmingham

Places are limited and successful applicants will be required to take an Extended Project Qualification (EPQ) in a relevant medically-related field.

Course duration: Mid Autumn term to the end of Year 12

Time commitment: Includes some after College commitment, which will vary from week to week.

Course costs: Occasional transport costs.

Who can sign up: High attaining students who have a serious aspiration to apply for a medical degree.

How and when to sign up: Membership is assigned via a selection process. Students are asked to express interest towards the end of the first half term. There are only 15 places and it is always oversubscribed.

Psychology Research School



Course description: Psychology students who join this specialist enrichment will have the opportunity to work with Dr Liz Blagrove from the University of Warwick.



This opportunity gives students the chance to investigate the science behind Psychology. In the first instance, students will replicate one of Dr Blagrove's own studies; then students will develop their own research project.

This enrichment leads to an Extended Project Qualification (EPQ), giving students the chance to boost their university application with extra UCAS points.

Course duration: July 2016 – April 2017

Time commitment: One period per week, and termly visits to the University of Warwick.

Course costs: Students are asked to contribute travel costs to Warwick.

Who can sign up: Year 13 Psychology students.

How and when to sign up: Initial interest logged during Year 12, then students are required to write a short essay about Psychology in the news based on specific criteria. This is a competitive process.



Shakespeare Academy

Course description: This is a specialist enrichment activity open to students on our A level English Literature and English Language courses. Students will benefit from workshops and mentoring with University Shakespeare Academics as well as seminars with the College's English staff and attendance of Shakespeare productions at theatres or by 'livestream' in the College theatre. Students will complete an Extended Project, which could take any form, from an essay to a magazine to a piece of artwork (see an example pictured right). The Universities of Birmingham, Warwick and Keele have been involved in this project.



Course duration: Mid Autumn term to Easter of Year 12

Time commitment: Includes after College commitment, which will vary from week to week.

Course costs: Approximately £75 towards the cost of transport and tickets to productions and screenings. The College also provides a bespoke embossed Log book for completion of the Extended Project, and the texts to be studied are provided on loan.

Who can sign up: High attaining students on our A level English Literature and English Language courses, often with ambitions to study English at university. Commitment, passion and determination are necessary to complete the programme and the rewards are very considerable; Universities have been unfailingly impressed with Shakespeare Academy Extended Projects, even lowering entry grades to courses other than English, because of their quality.

How and when to sign up: Students on the A level English Literature and English Language courses can apply in September. There are only 15 places available.



Social Sciences Academy



Course description: This is an opportunity for A level Economics, Politics and Sociology students to examine topical issues at a greater depth than at A level and to complete an Extended Project in an area of particular interest which takes them beyond their specification. If you join this course you will be working in conjunction with members of the Social Sciences team at the College and lecturers from local universities.

Course duration: June of Year 12 - early-April of Year 13

Time commitment: 1 period a week for the main sessions and 2-4 hours a week of independent study in completing your Extended Project Qualification.

Course costs: There may possibly be some local transport costs.

Who can sign up: This course is for students intending to study Economics, Politics, Sociology or a closely related subject at a Russell Group university. Whilst most students in the group will be studying one of these A levels, it is possible to join the Social Sciences Academy even if you are not currently studying one of our subjects, but would like to pick it up at university.

How and when to sign up: Most members of this Academy will have been recruited in the final weeks of Year 12, but it is possible to join the group in September with the agreement of the course leader.



UNIVERSITY OF
BIRMINGHAM



University of
Leicester

Teaching Academy

Course description: Interested in a career in teaching? This might be for you!



The Teaching Academy is for anyone interested in becoming a teacher (either nursery school, primary or secondary). The Academy will explain the different routes into teaching and help you find work placements in schools.

With links to local schools and universities, the Teaching Academy exists within the College's Career Passport scheme, which supports students to develop their employability skills through Professional Development Activities. This can include internship placements, masterclasses and talks. It will help to demonstrate your commitment to a career in teaching and your future career progression goals when applying for university. You will also have the opportunity for a practice interview.

Course duration: Mid-Autumn term to the end of the UCAS application process in Y13.

Time commitment: The time commitment will vary week to week. There will be opportunities to attend talks by speakers, visit local universities, have a practice interview and attend a work placement at a local school.

Course costs: There may possibly be some local transport costs.

Who can sign up: Students who are interested in becoming teachers.

How and when to sign up: Most students will sign up for this vocational academy in September Year 12, although it may be possible to join later in the year.

Wider Medical Academy

Course description: Interested in medical careers such as Medicine, Nursing etc? This might be for you!



With links to local hospital trusts, dentists and pharmacies, the Wider Medical Careers Academy exists within the College's Career Passport scheme, which supports students to develop their employability skills through Professional Development Activities. This can include internship placements, masterclasses, trips and talks. Completing these activities will demonstrate your commitment to a career within Medicine, Nursing, Ophthalmology and a range of Medical Careers and demonstrate your future career progression goals when applying for University.

Course duration: Mid-Autumn term to the end of the UCAS application process in Year 13.

Time commitment: Includes after College and holiday period commitment that will vary from week to week.

Course costs: There may be some travel costs involved in visits to local hospitals.

Who can sign up: Students interested in the careers listed above.

How and when to sign up: Most students will sign up for this vocational academy in September Year 12, although it may be possible to join later in the year.

Career Passport

Course description: The Career Passport helps you develop for your future career. The best candidates for university and employment will include Professional Development Activities that demonstrate their range of skills and experiences. In order to count towards the Career Passport the Professional Development Activities should be completed during your time at College.



You will be able to pick up activities through the Enrichment Programme and your Academic Coach will guide and monitor your progress. There are three stages to complete in order to achieve the Career passport. If you are studying a BTEC programme the opportunities for completing the Career passport will be built into the course:

Stage 1. Completing a skills self-assessment.

Stage 2. Completing a range of Professional Development Activities.

Stage 3. Receiving feedback from external organisations and incorporating it into a CV or personal statement.

The Career Passport recognises different levels of achievement: a Gold, Silver and Bronze Career Passport. Each is based on different levels of completion of stage 2

- Gold award Career Passport. Students who complete 100 hours of Professional Development Activities
- Silver award Career Passport. Students who complete 70 hours of Professional Development Activities
- Bronze award Career Passport. Students who complete 35 hours of Professional Development Activities.

Course duration: September 2017 - September 2018

Time commitment: 100 hours over the year

Course costs: There may possibly be some local travel costs.

Who can sign up: All students will be expected to participate.

How and when to sign up: Ongoing from September 2017.

Other Enrichments

If a specialist academy does not appeal, or you are not aiming for one of the careers covered by these academies, we would still encourage you to take part in an enrichment activity. Not only will it be enjoyable and help you to meet new people with the same interests as you, but it will bolster your future applications to university, further training or employment. Other enrichment opportunities available at the College include:

Personal & Skills Development:

Creative Writing
Stretch & Challenge Programme
Model United Nations
Serving Overseas
Volunteering

Modern Foreign Languages:

ABC Spanish
GCSE Russian

Creative Arts:

College Production
Collision Dance Company
ABRSM Music
Musical Activities

Sport:

Level 2 Award in Sports Leadership
Performance Sport - Men's Basketball
Performance Sport - Men's Cricket
Performance Sport - Men's Football
Performance Sport - Women's Football
Performance Sport - Women's Netball
Performance Sport - Men's Rugby

Student-led Enrichments:

Bike User Group
Health Ambassadors
Student-led Groups & Societies
Student Council

Why Enrichment Matters

Whether you choose a Specialist Academy or another less academic enrichment, choosing an activity to participate in alongside your studies is so valuable.

Perhaps most important is the benefit it can have on your progression prospects. When applying for university places, training courses or employment, you will find yourself facing stiff competition from other young people and simply having good grades may not be enough. Participating in a Specialist Academy shows a real commitment to your chosen area of academic interest. However, even one of the less academic enrichments will impress would-be employers, training providers and universities because it demonstrates commitment, team-work and social engagement, which are all qualities that are highly sought after.

There are other good reasons for participating in an enrichment, not least that it's a great way of making new friends with people who like the same things you like. It also helps you to develop new skills and become a well-rounded student who is at a distinct advantage when it comes to applying to university or for jobs.



Follow The Sixth Form College, Solihull on social media...

We're on Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Google+ and YouTube, not to mention at www.solihullsfca.ac.uk.



Keep up-to-date with news from around College, photos, videos and useful info about open days and how to apply.

facebook.com/solihullsixthform

twitter.com/sfcsapply

instagram.com/sfcsolihull

plus.google.com/+TheSixthFormCollegeSolihull

youtube.com/c/TheSixthFormCollegeSolihull



Engage with us on social media too!

