



SPECIALIST ACADEMIES GUIDE 2018/19

Contents

Specialist Academies Explained	2
Extended Project	3
Stretch & Challenge Programme	4
Academies and Projects:	
European Languages Centre	5
Humanities Academy	6
Pre-Medical School	7
Psychology Research School	8
Shakespeare Academy	9
Social Sciences Academy	10

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 their A Level subject. This is assessed at A level standard and as such an A* is achievable. It boosts university and employment applications.



Course duration: September – completed in Year 12

Time commitment: 1 lesson 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.

Stretch & Challenge Programme

Providing extensive support and guidance for students applying to Russell Group universities including Oxford and Cambridge.

Course description: The Stretch & Challenge Programme offers:

- 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.

(Students interested in medicine should also ensure they have signed up to the Pre Med programme).

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

Time commitment: Attendance at:

1. December launch meeting in year 12 (students with a GCSE score of at least 6.9 will be sent information regarding this via Tyber)
2. Two enrichment sessions during the Spring term
3. Two days Summer School in June of Year 12
4. Meetings as required such as Oxbridge test sessions, personal statement workshops, 1-to-1 meetings.

Course costs: None other than optional trips.

Who can sign up: There is a recruitment process for the Stretch and Challenge Programme. Usually students will need to have a very good GCSE profile of strong passes and an academic record would contain evidence of:

- unwavering enthusiasm and interest in their subject and other academic pursuits.
- being proactive and independent.
- having the desire to seek out wider reading and research opportunities.
- taking 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:

1. Students with a strong GCSE profile are invited to a meeting in December to address the key commitments of the programme.
2. Interested students then sign up via Moodle in December of Year 12.

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 below are recent German students on their exchange trip with partner school, Albert-Einstein-Schule in Schwalbach, near Frankfurt in November 2017. A return exchange took place in Spring 2018.

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.

“I was given the opportunity to take part in the Exchange Programme in France, which was very rewarding and allowed me to develop my fluency in French.”

Student Jessica Holder



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 2018. There are only 15 places available.



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 attendance at university lectures and problem-based learning activities. The universities involved have previously included Birmingham, Keele and Liverpool. Places are limited and successful applicants are encouraged to take an Extended Project Qualification (EPQ) in a relevant medically-related field.



Course duration: Mid-Autumn term to December of Year 13

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.



Student Paige Cartwright

Psychology Research School

THE UNIVERSITY OF
WARWICK

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 2018 – April 2019

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.



"The EPQ helped me develop a wide range of skills to use in my degree, including time management and research skills. It's given me experience of conducting my own research - I feel so much more confident and I know what to expect as I embark on a Psychology degree myself."

Student Paul Hicks



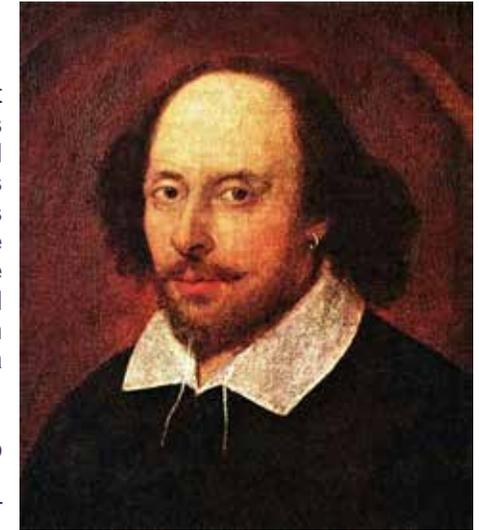
Shakespeare Academy

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 mentoring and seminars with the College's English staff and we promote attendance of Shakespeare productions at theatres. Students will complete an Extended Project, which could take any form, from an essay to a magazine to a piece of artwork.

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 £50 towards the cost of transport and tickets to productions and for the required resources.



"I was part of the Shakespeare Academy which was one of the hardest but most rewarding experiences, especially being exposed to literary academics and so many different universities."

Student Stevie Elkington



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

UNIVERSITY OF BIRMINGHAM  University of Leicester

Course description: This is an opportunity for A level Economics, A level Politics, A level Sociology and Level Three Diploma Criminology students to examine topical issues at a greater depth than is possible on your course, and to complete an Extended Project in an area of particular interest to you that takes you beyond the specification of your course. 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: September 2018 to June 2019

Time commitment: 1 period a week for the main session 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,

Criminology or a related subject at a competitive university.

How and when to sign up: You can apply to join this course at Enrolment if you have a strong set of GCSE results and would like an additional challenge. Places are limited and there will be a selection process to decide which students can join the group.



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