



CLASS OF 2027

DESS.SCH.AE



WELCOME

WE

TO DESS COLLEGE SIXTH FORM





# WELCOME FROM THE HEAD OF SCHOOL

Thank you for considering Dubai English Speaking Schools and DESS College as an option for the next phase of your education. This is a vitally important time as it acts as the transition between secondary school and university.

We have one of the most extensive ranges of courses for you to choose from in the Middle East specifically designed to meet the needs of all students and provide you with the very best opportunity to progress on to university.

The development of the Sixth Form at DESS College has been based on our ethos of providing exceptional teaching supported by discrete facilities for our senior students. Our Sixth Form students are treated differently, given extra responsibilities and privileges, whilst still being made to feel a part of the College and act as role models to our younger students.

We place great emphasis on supporting the students through this phase and preparing them for university. Our information, advice and guidance - (IAG) services are exceptional and we have strong links with many universities globally. We have a track record of students gaining places at the best universities in the UK, USA, Canada, South Africa, Australia, the Far East and Europe.

Our Sixth Form facilities are truly exceptional, I am sure that when you see these for yourself, you will agree and want to be a part of our Sixth Form at DESS College. These facilities include study areas, dining, social and leisure facilities, which all combine to provide an ambient place to relax and study independently. The Sixth Form facilities also include state of the art areas throughout the College including Science, Sport, Performing Arts, ICT and Design and Technology.

This is an exciting time to be a Sixth Form student at DESS College and I know that our Sixth Form Team will ensure you have the best possible experience during this phase. You will be challenged to achieve the best you can in order to make the next step, whatever or wherever that might be. You will be supported and guided academically, emotionally and throughout the university application process to help you gain places at the best universities around the world. You will also experience exceptional enrichment opportunities in areas such as Sport and Performing Arts.

I hope you find the information provided useful.

We look forward to receiving your application and discussing your future with us.

**Matthew Cotgrove**  
Head of School

“THIS IS AN **EXCITING** TIME  
TO BE A SIXTH FORM STUDENT  
AT DESS COLLEGE”





# DESS COLLEGE SIXTH FORM

The College believes that a world class Sixth Form experience must focus on three key areas which form the pillars of our development plan and guide our decision making:

1. Academic excellence coupled with exceptional pastoral care
2. Outstanding provision rooted in extraordinary experiences
3. Seamless transitions espoused from world-class information, advice and guidance

“THE PERSONAL CARE WE TAKE OF EACH AND **EVERY STUDENT** GIVES THEM THE CONFIDENCE AND EMOTIONAL RESILIENCE TO SUCCEED”

## Academic Excellence Coupled With Exceptional Pastoral Care

As a centre for academic excellence, DESS College Sixth Form attracts students from all over the world and has been oversubscribed since 2021. Students graduate in Year 13 with the results and prowess to take university places in prestigious establishments both in the UK and much further afield. This year, 44% of our students are now studying at Russell Group universities, with students placed at seven out of ten of the top performing universities in the UK. Additionally, 10% of our students opted to study in the UAE, and many others have ventured further afield to study in countries including the US, Canada and the Netherlands. The personal care we take of each and every student gives them the confidence and emotional resilience to succeed and we take a keen interest, through our Alumni programme, of the future endeavours of our students.

## Outstanding Provision Rooted In Extraordinary Experiences

Dubai English Speaking Schools (DESS) is an exceptional place to study and work. The physical space apportioned to our Sixth Form students would rival any University campus and ensures that our students are afforded every provision necessary to allow them to thrive and learn. A rich and generous “Super Curriculum” ensures that, outside of lessons, our students are exposed to a wealth of enrichment opportunities and provided with platforms on which to compete and perform. The Sixth Form Centre is a lively place of academia often thronging with society meetings, debate and general social activity.

## Seamless Transitions Espoused From World Class Information, Advice & Guidance

Sixth Form is an interesting phase as in many ways it serves as a gateway to the next, at DESS College, we believe that everything we do should open as many doors as possible and we therefore work hard with both students and parents in opening their eyes to the endless opportunities that await. With skilled professionals versed in post-16 information, advice and guidance we have the capacity to work with our DESS College families in exploring future careers, potential university applications and ensuring that the transition from this phase to the next is as seamless as possible. For example, a comprehensive Oxbridge pathway is available for students, alongside others for those pursuing Ivy League or Medicine.

**Keely Vernon-Ward**  
Head of Sixth Form



# THE JOURNEY

## Overall Experience

Overall, DESS College Sixth Form provides everything necessary for a young person to flourish in their most formative years. It shapes the adult they will become and equips them with the skills, knowledge and emotional intelligence to make wise choices. Ultimately, it sends them on to the next phase of their life with an incredible lasting impression of education, which for the majority, leaves them eager for more. Through DESS College's vast range of personalised pathways which can create a curriculum suitable for the widest range of students, DESS College ensures that all succeed, all are supported, and all look back on their Sixth Form years with warmth and fondness.



## Our Students

As it should, study forms a generous portion of the daily diet of our Sixth Form students. However, studying in the Sixth Form is very different from the experience students have had previously and work is done with students to help them understand the Science of Learning and therefore improve their study habits. Unlike at GCSE or IB, students take a much smaller range of subjects, yet the depth is incomparable and allows students to truly immerse themselves in subjects for which they are passionate.

We are well-versed and equipped to support students who find the initial transition a challenge and use coaching and mentoring to ensure that the pace and demands of their Level 3 courses are eventually met and that those students can be independent and thrive. DESS College students become lifelong learners and are prepared for further study at university or in the world of work.

## Our Campus

DESS College Sixth Form students have the benefit of a purpose built Sixth Form Centre, which provides various independent learning spaces for private or collaborative study. At its heart is an extensive communal social area with all-day dining, wellness rooms, a high-performance gym and a central courtyard. Designed with students in mind, the space mirrors the ethos of the College and is truly a spectacular part of the campus providing our students with a university-style experience. The branded pool table remains a favourite of the students, but we are always looking to procure further interesting facilities and to use the spaces for extraordinary events and experiences.

The transition to Sixth Form should start with careful consideration of the type of pathway you want to follow. In this section, you will find information and insight into our curriculum pathways; Academic, Vocational and Blended.

# STAY ALWAYS WITH H T H P A T H W A Y S SIXTH FORM



## CURRICULUM PATHWAYS

The Sixth Form curriculum at DESS College is rich and varied, created to provide infinite pathways for our diverse group of students. Enhanced and enriched by a Super Curriculum, the overall Sixth Form experience is one designed to ensure academic excellence alongside extraordinary experiences.

The three pathways at DESS College Sixth Form are Academic, Vocational or Mixed. Students pursuing our Academic route can select from 24 different GCE Advanced Level (A Level) Qualifications and should choose three separate subjects in total.

Students pursuing our Vocational route can select from eight different BTEC/RSL Qualifications and should choose three options in total. In Vocational Pathways many subjects can be taken as a single option, known as a Sub Diploma (worth one A level) or a double option, known as a Diploma (worth two A levels).

Students wishing to pursue our Mixed Pathway can choose a total of three options from either list.

The decision to pursue an academic or vocational post-16 pathway should be made by considering many factors. A levels are assessed by terminal examinations, after two years of study, whilst BTECs rely on continuous assessment with no examinations. A levels tend to be academic and philosophical in content whilst BTEC's rely on practical and real-world application. Furthermore, success at A level typically relies on achieving at least a grade 6 in that subject at GCSE whilst BTEC success relies heavily on hard work, organisation and application.

### Academic Pathway | CODE AA

3 A LEVEL SUBJECTS = 3

### Vocational Pathway A | CODE VA

1 BTEC DIPLOMA (Worth 2) /  
1 BTEC SUB DIPLOMA (Worth 1) = 3

### Vocational Pathway B | CODE VB

3 BTEC SUB DIPLOMAS (Worth 1 each) = 3

### Mixed Pathway | CODE MA

2 A LEVEL SUBJECTS & 1 BTEC SUB  
DIPLOMA (Worth 1) = 3

### Mixed Pathway A | CODE MB

1 A LEVEL SUBJECT & 1 BTEC DIPLOMA  
(Worth 2) = 3

### Mixed Pathway C | CODE MC

1 A LEVEL SUBJECT & 2 SUB DIPLOMAS  
(Worth 1 each) = 3

## ACADEMIC PATHWAYS

As a British Curriculum Sixth Form we offer GCE Advanced Levels (A Levels). Being a large, oversubscribed, established Sixth Form allows us to offer an extensive choice. A Levels are examined after two years and graded from A\*-U. In the academic year 2023/2024, 48% of all DESS College A Level grades were awarded at A or A\* and 77% of grades were A\*-B. Both statistics are significantly above UK averages and are testament to our experience in delivering world-class Post-16 education.

Please find our extensive list of A Level choices here:

- Art photography
- Art - Fine Art
- Arabic
- Biology
- Business Studies
- Chemistry
- Computer Science
- Design and Technology: Product Design
- Economics
- English Language
- English Literature
- French
- Further Mathematics
- Geography
- History
- Information Technology
- Law
- Mathematics
- Media Studies
- Physics
- Physical Education
- Politics
- Psychology
- Spanish

## VOCATIONAL PATHWAYS

As an inclusive College, we are proud to offer a growing range of BTEC National Diploma, (two options), BTEC Subsidiary Diploma, (one option) and RSL (Rock School London) Qualifications. Vocational Qualifications rely on ongoing assessment of coursework and are graded from Pass to Distinction Star or D\*. In the academic year 2023/24, 85% achieved D and D\* 100% of students passed. Both statistics are significantly above UK averages and testament to our commitment to providing bespoke pathways for our students.

Please see our growing list of BTEC/RSL choices listed here:

- BTEC - Applied Science
- BTEC - Creative Media
- BTEC - Enterprise & Entrepreneurship
- BTEC - Hospitality
- BTEC - Sport
- BTEC - Travel & Tourism
- BTEC - Information Technology
- RSL - Creative & Performing Arts (CAPA)
- RSL - Music Practitioner (MUSPRA)

# VOCATIONAL STUDENT TESTIMONIAL

Name: **Alexander Hannah**

Graduation Year: **2025**

The transition from GCSE to BTEC was an extremely positive one. At GCSE, I found that the pressure was very intense because it always came down to a few high-stakes exams at the end of the year, which you had to study for over many months. That pressure often felt overwhelming, especially knowing one bad 'test day' could be hugely detrimental. In contrast, BTEC has allowed me to pace myself, refine my work over time, and ensure it was the best it could be. Instead of cramming for a test, I now focus on continuous review and improvement, which feels far more manageable, and for me, is a more realistic way of working.

One challenge I've faced with the BTEC pathway is the danger of letting work pile up. If you're not careful, you could end up with a huge workload, which can be a very overwhelming situation. However, the benefits outweigh this. Unlike traditional coursework or exams, BTEC includes a lot of practical work, meaning you're not just

stuck writing essays all the time. This hands-on approach allows you to engage with what you enjoy and excel in. For me, it's far more engaging and motivating when I get to apply my skills practically.

My advice for anyone considering this pathway is to make the most of the opportunities to refine and develop your skills over time. While BTEC is less exam-heavy, it's important to remain consistent with your effort. You should also be open to the practical aspects of the course, as this is where you can really learn through doing, which can be incredibly rewarding if you're passionate about the subject.

Looking to the future, I hope to continue down a path that's focused on practical, hands-on work. In particular, I want to pursue musical composition, which is something I'm very passionate about and interested in. Musical composition allows me to apply the practical and creative abilities that BTEC has helped me develop, and I'm excited to take that forward into my future career.



**“THIS HANDS-ON  
APPROACH ALLOWS  
YOU TO ENGAGE WITH  
WHAT YOU ENJOY AND  
EXCEL IN”**

# THREE IS A MAGIC NUMBER

The majority of university offers are based on three subjects. Offers to even the most prestigious universities in the world tend to be there A\* grades. However, the choice of three options is also conducive to a well-rounded Sixth Form experience, allowing time for enriching a student’s timetable with extra activities and moments to access our Super Curriculum.

## Student A - Three Options

| Periods In A DESS Week |                           | 28 Hours          |
|------------------------|---------------------------|-------------------|
| Option One             | 6 Hours Of Taught Content | 22                |
| Option Two             | 6 Hours Of Taught Content | 16                |
| Option Three           | 6 Hours Of Taught Content | 10                |
| Enrichment             | 3 Hours Of Taught Content | 7                 |
| Wellbeing              | 1 Hours Of Taught Content | 6                 |
| Independent Study      | 2 Hours Of Taught Content | 0                 |
|                        |                           | (Hours remaining) |

\*The minimum recommended amount of weekly independent study, outside of taught content, per option is six. Therefore, a student would still be expected to complete 12 hours of study at home/after school per week.

## Student B - Four Options

| Periods In A DESS Week |                           | 28 Hours          |
|------------------------|---------------------------|-------------------|
| Option One             | 6 Hours Of Taught Content | 22                |
| Option Two             | 6 Hours Of Taught Content | 16                |
| Option Three           | 6 Hours Of Taught Content | 10                |
| Option Four            | 6 Hours Of Taught Content | 4                 |
| Enrichment             | 3 Hours Of Taught Content | 1                 |
| Wellbeing              | 1 Hours Of Taught Content | 0                 |
|                        |                           | (Hours remaining) |

\*The minimum recommended amount of weekly independent study, outside of taught content, per option is six. Therefore, a student would still be expected to complete 12 hours of study at home/after school per week.

Whilst Option A is balanced, Option B leaves no time for independent study which can prove problematic. Learning positive study habits is an essential part of a student’s Sixth Form experience equipping them with essential skills for university and later life. Additionally, the commitment to completing an additional 24 hours of study on top of a rigorous curriculum can, in some cases, have a detrimental effect on the wellbeing of a student in the formative years of their life.



# BESPOKE PATHWAYS

Proud to be an inclusive College, with a diverse student body, we have developed four specific pathways for students who are Emirati, are planning to study in Australia or South Africa, Arabic passport holders or Acutely Academic in a bid to make the transition from Key Stage Four to Sixth Form as seamless as possible.

## Emirati

DESS College welcomes Emirati families and ensures that they are provided with the necessary information, advice and guidance regarding Equivalency so that they can confidently pursue their chosen Sixth Form pathway. Equivalency refers to British Curriculum Public Examinations being recognised by the UAE and Ministry of Education therefore resulting in a Leavers Certificate which will allow the bearer to continue their study in the UAE or to avail of government employment in the UAE.

Decree 199 states that Emirati students must pass five GCSE subjects (for equivalency, a “pass” is considered level three and above). They must also pass either two AS Level or one A Level subjects with a grade between A\* - E.

BTEC Level 3 Diploma can now be equivalised to the MOE vocational Secondary Education Certificate providing that the student meets the following conditions:

1. Pass five GCSEs (above a Level 3) or obtain an MYP Certificate.
2. Score a PP grade in the BTEC Level 3 with a minimum of 120 credits points.

Looking beyond DESS, the EMSAT is no longer the only accepted university admission test in English and Maths. Emirati students will receive bespoke information and guidance for the admission test and available pathways during their journey at Sixth Form.

Please see the equivalency subjects to be studied by Emirati students here.

\*Please note that this information is accurate as of October 2024, but may be subject to change.

## Equivalency Subjects

- English Literature
- English Language
- Maths
- Further Maths
- Chemistry
- Physics
- Biology
- History
- Geography
- Psychology
- Information Technology
- Computer Science
- Law
- Economics
- Business Studies
- French

## Arabic A

To support students who will study Arabic A and/or Islamic throughout their two years of Sixth Form, we have developed a distinct strategy. These students must keep either Option A or Option C free from a choice to ensure that their timetable remains manageable and compliant. Most subjects span more than one option block therefore it also ensures that choice for Arabic A students remains as boundless as possible.

## Australia and South Africa

Specifically for our students hoping to return to Australia or South Africa, we offer a Cambridge AS English Course. This optional, yet bespoke course, addresses the gap in the guided learning hours for English that universities in Australia and South Africa often require. Top universities in Australia and South Africa require English until the end of Year 12. To facilitate this necessity, DESS College is proud to offer AS English Language which can be chosen in one of the option blocks.

## Acutely Academic

Despite not being academically selective, DESS College attracts students of extraordinary intellectual ability. For those students, a four A Level academic pathway may be conducive. With pastoral care at the heart of our decision making at DESS College, a set of guidelines allows families to consider whether this pathway may suit their son/daughter and protects the interest of the student. To consider this pathway a student would typically obtain an even blend of Level 8's and Level 9's across the board at GCSE.



The dictionary tells us that for something to be truly described as exceptional it must have the elements of brilliance, atypicality and uniqueness. This section is dedicated to everything out of the ordinary. The attention to detail, the innovation and the creative spirit that drives DESS College's Sixth Form staff, truly provides an exceptional experience for our students.

THE  
SIXTH



# THE DESS COLLEGE DIFFERENCE

At DESS College Sixth Form, we pride ourselves on nurturing individuality and celebrating diversity. A DESS College Sixth Form student can be described as tolerant, kind and well mannered, but also confident and resilient.

## A Fresh Start For All

The Sixth Form journey goes quickly; from start to finish the two years consist of only around 65 academic weeks. In this short time, we hope to ignite our students' self-development in academics, cultural and social engagement and a growing confidence in their individual identity. We are proud to assert the mantra 'A Fresh Start for All' from the very beginning of this journey. Metaphorically and literally, this short phrase empowers students to feel that Sixth Form marks the beginning of a new chapter, that they are 'moving on' with maturity and growth. Through our pastoral guidance, students are encouraged to actively engage with the management of their own brand, by reflecting on their aspirations for the future and how they might be achieved.



## Freedom And Responsibility

Sixth Form breaks away from the rigidity of the Key Stage Four structure. This brings a newfound sense of freedom. Students, for the first time, have non-contact periods, the opportunity to sign out after their last lesson of the day and facilities exclusive to them as Sixth Formers. At DESS College Sixth Form, we ensure that students understand the importance of balancing said freedoms with increased responsibility. For example, students are expected to be punctual, focused and equipped to learn when they are onsite. Similarly, they must be respectful to staff, peers and the environment around them. They should develop mature and positive working relationships with their teachers. We believe that the ability to balance freedom with responsibility is the true mark of maturity and independence and are essential skills for the adult world beyond DESS College.

## Sixth Form Student Support

An innovation of DESS College Sixth Form is to provide the student body with a full time, non-teaching, Student Manager whose sole responsibility is to take care of the academic and pastoral welfare of the students. Unlike a traditional Sixth Form structure, DESS's commitment to being student-centred affords its pupils ample opportunities to seek professional help for any areas in which they may be struggling. The Student Manager mentors students providing them with the skills and strategies needed for autonomous and independent study. For students that may need additional well-being support, our resident Student Advisors are an important aspect of our exceptional well-being provision at Sixth Form. Through 1:1 sessions, the Student Manager alongside the Student Advisors guarantee that even with a large cohort, every student has access to someone to help care for their well-being, mental health and long-term goals.

## Rites And Rituals

The freedoms and responsibilities that students experience through their Sixth Form journey are equally reflected in their personal lives. These rites of passage underpin our celebration of this final stage of education at the College. Students are celebrated for passing their driving test, a momentous milestone on the road to becoming an adult. We also mark their eighteenth birthday with a Friday celebration. Most of us can recall our own time-stamped memories of these events and remember where we were and who we were with. These weekly events serve as a reminder of the importance of celebration, of supporting one another, and brings the Sixth Form together in song and laughter at the end of the busy week. This dedication to creating a strong sense of community also manifests in the 'Friday Tune.' A student-nominated popular song is played across the Sixth Form Centre each Friday, ensuring that students leave the week feeling upbeat, and with a spring in their step. We hope that 'their' song, will remind them of their journey with us for years to come.

## Preparing For Life

During Year 12, one day per terms is dedicated to 'LIFE'. These integral days are dedicated to important issues, information advice and guidance, that do not feature in a traditional curriculum, but would feature on every adult's list of things that are necessary to know. From university and alternative pathways, to every day procedures like tenancy agreements and financial management, the LIFE curriculum explores a range of topics and focuses on ensuring our students are ready to live an independent life. Alongside skills and tips the curriculum also carefully delves into sensitive areas, delivered in a transactional manner intended to inform rather than debate. Parents have control over exposure to these topics but typically agree that the College takes this part of their responsibility seriously and have been historically grateful for this initiative.



“SIXTH FORM IS ABOUT ADDING  
VALUE, NOT JUST GRADES”

## MVP: Manage, Venture, Pioneer

The MVP is a self-development project for Year 12 students, undertaken at the very start of their Sixth Form journey. All students are encouraged to add to their portfolio of skills, service and experience in Term One, recognising that Sixth Form is about adding value, not just grades. With core skills and ideas being delivered in tutor time, students are required to add to this in their own time, forging their own pathways. The MVP is underpinned by three themes: Manage, Venture, Pioneer. Students should record at least three outcomes for each area and be able to reflect on the impact these have had on their own self development. The MVP will then serve to support future applications of all kinds. In the spirit of celebration, the end of the MVP is marked with a social event, providing recognition of a busy, yet enjoyable first term as Sixth Form students.

## Leaving An Incredible Lasting Impression

After two momentous years with us we work hard to ensure that all students leave DESS College Sixth Form knowing that they are always welcome back but also with memories and friendships that will last well into adulthood. A committee dedicates itself to planning events for the last few weeks of Year 13 and prepares events including. A Morning of Sport, The Gown Shop, The Yearbook, Shirt Signing Day, Graduation, SSLT Lunch and other memorable events to ensure that every DESS College student leaves feeling part of something special. We are always sad to see our students leave but comforted that we have dedicated two years to creating young men and women with the DESS College Demeanour.

# SUPER CURRICULUM

DESS College Sixth Formers aren't afraid to take risks and try something new. For example, in the realms of public speaking, students choose from debate, World Scholars and MUN competitions and residencies throughout the year to hone their skills, and fill their trophy cabinets! The opportunities and experiences are truly extraordinary, allowing students to create personal statements worthy of any prestigious university. To complement our academic and vocational pathways, we offer a variety of academic enrichment subjects designed to enhance the overall curriculum for our students. These subjects are taken in addition to the 'three' academic and/or vocational options, and offer students the opportunity to grow new interests, skills and their love of learning. Often highly valuable in terms of university and job applications, this is an additional qualification that we would recommend for those that enjoy being challenged, and relish the opportunity to explore subjects further.

## Extended Project Qualification (EPQ)

For students who are interested in extending their knowledge of a specific subject, we offer the EPQ. This qualification provides an opportunity for students to extend their abilities beyond an A Level syllabus, and to prepare for University or their future career. Students have the choice of writing a 5000 word dissertation with academic referencing or to construct an artefact accompanied by a research paper. In either case, students learn advanced research skills as well as being given the opportunity to conduct their own primary research. Students are supported by a weekly lesson as well as regular meetings with a supervisor. With no set subjects areas, students have the opportunity to pursue their own subject interests and determine their own title in conjunction with the EPQ Centre Coordinator. The EPQ can act as a valuable source of UCAS points with students able to earn up to 28 points.

## Classical Studies

Classical Studies enables students to learn about the cultures and beliefs of the ancient Greeks and Romans in a multi-disciplinary subject which covers both ideas and context. The study of the Classical world is invaluable in helping students understand contemporary events as Ancient Greece and Ancient Rome have shaped modern perspectives on topics ranging from Politics to Art. Classics is a subject designed to enhance critical thinking skills and build capacity for empathising with people from different cultures. In October of Year 13 students sit an AS Examination which contributes to their university application.

## Modern Languages

There is an opportunity to study an AS in French or Spanish as an additional enrichment subject. As an International College we are proud to offer this provision. The acquisition of a modern foreign language is not only a sign of genuine scholarship, but can also help future employment prospects.

## Mathematical Studies

Mathematical Studies is a course designed to maintain and develop real-life maths skills. The content that the students work through is not purely theoretical or abstract; it can be applied on a day-to-day basis in work, study or life and includes a financial maths element. The skill developed in the study of mathematics are increasingly important in the workplace and in higher education; Mathematical Studies will help students develop and maintain these essential skills.

## Super Curriculum Student Testimonial:

Name: **Ruby Liberty Flynn**

Graduation Year: **2024**

Of all my experiences at Sixth Form, there is nothing that I would recommend doing more than Classical Studies at AS-level. As someone who has always been interested in art, literature and history, I was initially drawn to Classical Studies as it combined all these elements into one subject. Classical Studies is not only an engaging and thought-provoking subject, but also provides students with the skills necessary for evaluating sources, crafting arguments and being able to see the other side of a debate and contend it in an essay.

Furthermore, since I will be studying law and literature at university, Classical Studies has provided me with a solid foundation of legal understanding, through the exploits of Augustus Caesar and his 'restoration' of the republic of Rome. Similarly, I was able to continue my passion for literature through the study of Virgil's Aeneid and the Odes of Horace, as part of the course. This allowed me to go beyond the solely British texts that we study in A-level English literature, and gain an enriched and more diverse understanding of Literature and its history.

Additionally, as a language lover and an A-level French student, I have always been interested in languages and their evolutions. However, I have never had the opportunity to study Latin at school. Yet, through Classical Studies I was able to learn some Latin terminology which linked to the course, alongside phrases which have no direct translation in English. Following my study of Classical Studies, I completed a course in Latin, outside of school, due to my new found appreciation for the language, which I gained through Classical Studies.

Ultimately, I would recommend taking an enrichment subject because it provides you with a deeper and more refined understanding of the world and your other subjects. Enrichment subjects are an excellent way to stand out in your applications to university, as it demonstrates how you have gone above and beyond the standard A-level/BTEC curriculum.

**“I HAVE GAINED AN ENRICHED AND MORE DIVERSE UNDERSTANDING OF LITERATURE AND ITS HISTORY”**

# SUPER SOCIETIES

In the spirit of developing a university feel to our provision, our societies have grown in popularity and are now a staple of Sixth Form life. Typically formed within faculties at university, societies are student led groups who meet regularly to pursue academic exploration beyond the classroom. The DESS College Sixth Form Societies are simply remarkable and inspiring to attend; a humbling unique selling point. DESS College recognises that the key to academic enrichment lies in the exploration of specialist fields and we believe that our societies offer the kind of independence that characterises undergraduate study.

Competitive universities invariably tell us that they are seeking curious students who are passionate about their subject. Exam-orientated curricular do not always foster this: firstly, content heavy syllabuses can discourage wider reading and, secondly, the importance of coursework and project work has diminished in recent years.

Each society has its own unique structure of leadership, but the common feature is that they are driven by students. Each week societies host presentations, workshops and discussion forums that allow students to hone their public speaking skills, extend their knowledge and exercise leadership. Often students bring insights from their Extended Project Qualification (EPQ) research and are able to discuss and refine their ideas with like-minded peers. Visitors to the College are invariably impressed by the vibrant atmosphere of the societies and the self-regulated learning that goes on within them.

Here is a list of our current societies. These can and will change in response to student engagement and demand. Which will you choose?

## Humanities:

- Philosophy and politics
- Travel Society
- Model United Nations (MUN)
- Race4Life
- History Society
- Psychology Society
- Sociology and Criminology Society

## Public Speaking:

- Debating
- Tedx DESS Youth

## Maths:

- Maths Society
- Why Equations are Beautiful

## Creative:

- Media Society
- Art Society

## Business:

- Business and Economics
- Desconomic Review

## Science and Technology:

- Engineering and Physics
- Medicine Society
- Biology Society
- Chemistry Society
- Environmental Society
- Motor Sport Club
- SIM Racing
- Technology Society



# STUDENT LEADERSHIP

DESS College creates leaders. Surrounded by staff with post-graduate qualifications in Leadership, DESS College students are well supported in understanding theoretical approaches and provided with multiple opportunities to apply their knowledge.

Sixth Form students are expected to lead in some capacity and are encouraged to take an active role in the DESS community. With a range of tiers and positions available, their leadership helps shape the future of the College. The idea of leaving a 'legacy' is a phrase used frequently to ignite the passion of the students and to empower them to understand their leadership potential.

## Student Leadership And Innovation

DESS College Sixth Form understands that true leadership is not about a badge or a title. Through self-development programs such as the MVP, we place great emphasis on autonomous innovation. We encourage our students to pioneer projects that impact our College community in positive ways. The MVP officially ends at the start of winter break, but we are confident it will ignite an ember of leadership in many students. Regular opportunities to develop leadership across the College are offered throughout their tenure as a Sixth Former, often centering around opportunities for service in the community and mentoring.

## Organisational Student Leadership and Innovation

There are opportunities, of course, to support the College in a more formal leadership role. These roles are often offered as a result of demonstrating early on in the Sixth Form journey, a dedication to innovation, mentoring and service. Roles currently include: House Leader, Society Leadership roles, The Senior Student Leadership Team (SSLT, which includes Head Girl and Head Boy of DESS College) and some other auxiliary roles that change year on year. These roles are prestigious and include the mentoring of peers as well as leading whole school events and building lower school connections.



## SSLT

The SSLT, or Student Senior Leadership Team, are a team of six leaders with incredible potential. They head up large initiatives, are mentored by the Head of Sixth Form and can be called upon by any member of the SLT (Senior Leadership Team) to fulfil tasks and roles. They are led by the Head Boy and Head Girl.

## Head Boy & Head Girl

To be appointed Head Boy or Head Girl at DESS College is an incredible honour. The selection process is fair yet rigorous and testament to the extensive exposure to Leadership that those that make it to the final stages have already experienced. To ensure there is an element of mentoring and a 'Handing over' of titles, the incoming Head Boy and Head Girl are chosen at the end of Term Two of Year 12 so that they can learn under the tutelage of the outgoing Head Boy and Head Girl in Term Three. A self-sustaining system compliments the ideology of the College of 'Growing from within'.

Leadership is arguably the most beneficial activity a student can pursue outside of their studies. Planning, decision making, communicating and working as part of a team are all essential skills that are developed and enhanced during these experiences.

Join us and look out for your chance to become a DESS College Student Leader in Term One.



The Sixth Form is the pinnacle of a DESS College education, and we are proud to send well rounded, resilient, young adults onto the next chapter of their lives. This section gives a glimpse into how the Higher Education department, and the Information, Advice and Guidance team, work together to ensure that all students are ready for their next steps.

# LIFE BEYOND SIXTH FORM



# POST DESS COLLEGE PATHWAYS - ACADEMIC

Sixth Form precedes a period of major change. It marks the end of a student's long association with the School and the beginnings of formal adult status as they embark on the next stage of their lives. Such a significant step requires thorough preparation as what students decide now will impact upon them for some time to follow. The range of options is considerable and there is much to think about; planning ahead, choosing a course of action from the alternatives available and matching ambitions to abilities is all part of the preparation process.

DESS College's Higher Education Department offers bespoke information, advice and guidance to all students. We support our students to make informed decisions about their university choices and post-18 opportunities.

The majority of our students apply to, and are accepted into, universities all over the world. They will be guided through the various application processes, for example the UCAS system for entry to British universities, or the Common Application process for the United States. Students will be encouraged to explore the opportunities available to them and as a team, we give our full support to them in the pursuit of their sought after university places.

## UK applications

DESS College students are offered places at top UK universities, including those in the Russell Group as well as Oxford and Cambridge. The pathway to a UK application begins early in Year 12 when students are given the opportunity to research universities and courses using the Unifrog platform. Our experienced tutors assist Year 12 students in initiating a UCAS application form. This process accelerates in Year 13 when university choices are confirmed and the application is submitted to UCAS.

Provision for UK applicants also includes:

- Dedicated Oxbridge provision, including Oxbridge interview preparation
- Medicine, Dentistry and Veterinary interview programme
- University visits and taster lectures

## US and Canada application

Universities in North America are popular destinations. The Higher Education Department introduces students in Year 12 to the Common Application (USA applications) and OUAC (Canadian applications). We ensure that our students are fully equipped to submit a competitive application to prestigious universities in both USA and Canada.

Provision for North American applicants also includes:

- Bespoke workshops on all factors pertaining to a competitive application
- One-to-one meeting with a university counsellor
- Visits from relevant universities

## Europe and rest of the worlds

In an increasingly changing world, we have students applying to a number of different countries and our Higher Education team continually keeps up to date with the requirements of applications to multiple locations. DESS College students are offered places in Europe, in particular the Netherlands, as well as the UAE, Australia and South Africa, to name just a few. We will support students in all applications, to any country that they wish to pursue.

Provision for Europe & the Rest of the World, also includes:

- Bespoke workshops on application platforms, such as Studielink (Netherlands)
- Personalised information and guidance on each destination
- Visits from a number of universities

## The Unifrog Platform:

All students at DESS College Sixth Form have access to a dedicated software programme, Unifrog, that enables them to search internationally for relevant courses based on their interests and academic attainment worldwide. This platform is utilised throughout Key Stage Four so that students are familiar with Unifrog as an application tool, and an integral resource for information, advice and guidance.

## University Fair/University visits:

To assist with course and institution choices, we host one large university fair for all students, alongside multiple visits from worldwide universities during Year 12 and 13. Bespoke presentations are given by the universities to mirror the student's application process.

## Parental Engagement:

Throughout the application process, the Higher Education team will host various parental engagement opportunities. Some will be small, bespoke seminars for specific destinations for example USA & Canada applicants, Oxbridge & Medicine applicants or they will be in the form of larger audience presentation.

As a result of this comprehensive preparation, DESS College has an excellent track record of students securing places in high demand and competitive courses, at the most prestigious educational institutions across the world.

## Higher Education Department



**Mitchell Burke**  
Sixth Form Transition  
Manager



**Christine Dunne**  
Higher Education  
Coordinator



**Peter Flynn**  
Academic Enrichment  
Manager

# POST-DESS

## Destinations 2024

DESS College Sixth Form is incredibly proud of its 255 students who graduated in 2024. The majority of our students chose an academic route and moved on to higher education, while others took alternative pathways such as pursuing a gap year, and full time employment. DESS College students secured places in many of the world's leading universities, with over 44% of the cohort at Russell Group universities in the UK. 16% of our UK applicants attend universities in the top 10 Best UK universities 2024 league table (as referenced in the UK Times). North America remains a top destination with 10% students attending prestigious universities in Canada and the US. The UAE is emerging as a popular destination with 10% of students electing to stay in the UAE for further study.



# POST DESS COLLEGE PATHWAYS - ALTERNATIVE

As part of their Sixth Form studies, students will take part in careers workshops and attend academic coaching sessions to provide them with guidance on the choices available to them. Experienced staff are available to meet with students and parents to discuss the routes available for them to follow when they leave College. Students are encouraged to undertake work experience opportunities to give them firsthand experiences of potential future careers.

The Information Advice and Guidance (IAG) team form a cornerstone in the preparation of our Sixth Form students for life beyond the College. As the world of work rapidly evolves, we aim to develop core transferable skills such as adaptability, problem-solving and innovative thinking to prepare them for the uncertain future of the labour market.

Year 12 students will begin to think about their future career aspirations from early on in their Sixth Form journey. The integral use of Unifrog as a careers and higher education research tool will be fundamental from the outset. Year 12 students are encouraged to engage with psychometric testing on the platform, to explore potential career pathways, attend live webinars and utilise the wide range of tools available on the platform such as signposting relevant online courses and the CV writing tool.

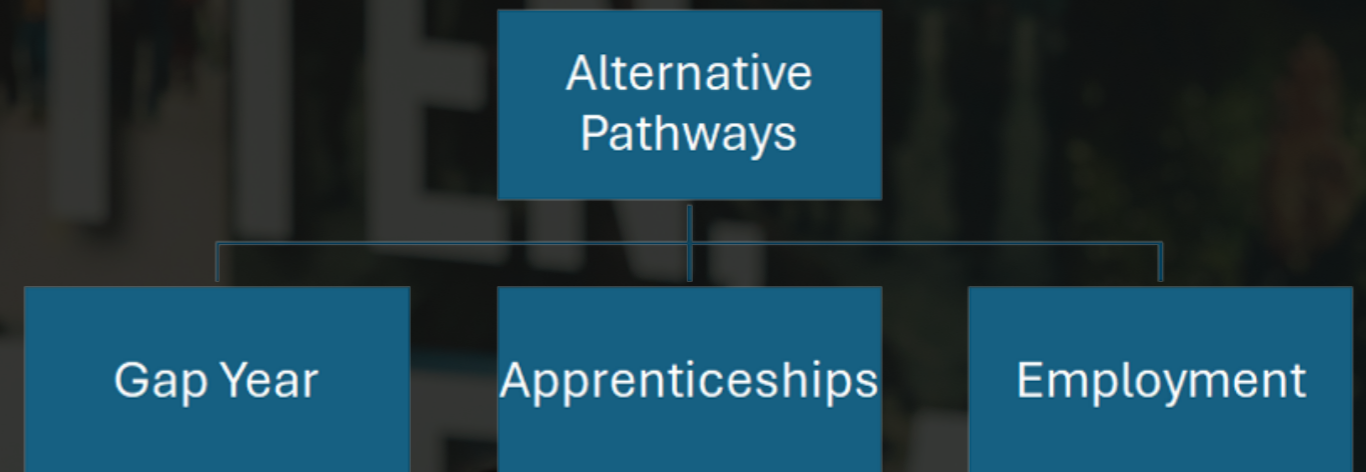
From the start of Year 12, we aim to open the students' minds to the multiple pathways available to them following the completion of their Sixth Form studies. To compliment the work of the higher education department, the IAG team focus their attention on students who are unsure about their future pathway. We work closely with these students to coach them towards their future aspirations. We provide bespoke support and guidance for those who are considering alternative pathways such as taking a gap year, completing a higher or degree apprenticeship or entering a form of employment. This comprehensive approach ensures that all students are supported whatever their aspirations may be.



**Laura Reidy**  
Head of IAG



**Fiona Gibbs**  
Academic Coaching  
Support



The IAG team ensure that students are exposed to a range of career exploration opportunities including hosting specialist speakers who are often linked to our societies such as MedSoc, Economics and Psychology. The IAG team facilitates opportunities to link with departments across the school and provides opportunities for career exploration within differing fields. In the past, this has included participating in essay competitions for places on immersive summer courses, volunteering to represent the College in STEM challenges at local universities and signing up to virtual careers experiences which are advertised on a weekly basis. The provision also includes taking students on careers-focused visits to places such as hospitals, engineering companies, law firms and aviation facilities to further broaden their understanding of these industries.

Every year, we celebrate National Careers Week at the College which involves over 50 professionals across a wide range of industries providing insight into their area of expertise. This presents a chance for students to discuss skills they could be developing to strengthen a potential career pathway in that industry and schedule possible work experience and placement opportunities. DESS College encourages all students to undertake work experience as part of Project 12.5. We strongly believe that hands-on experience is hugely beneficial to students when making an informed decision on their future university and career pathway. Aside from this, work experience can be a valuable addition to university applications often setting students apart from their fellow applicants. The IAG team have built a rich bank of industry connections and will offer a range of work experience opportunities each year in the lead up to Project 12.5.

As qualified coaches, the IAG team are passionate in guiding all Sixth Form students to their full potential. We believe that with the right tools and guidance, every student can succeed in becoming a thriving member of our fast-changing society and greatly contribute to a better world.

“THE INFORMATION ADVICE AND GUIDANCE (IAG) TEAM FORM A **CORNERSTONE** IN THE PREPARATION OF OUR SIXTH FORM STUDENTS FOR LIFE BEYOND THE COLLEGE”

# ADMISSIONS SIXTH FORM

We can't wait to welcome you! This section will help you through the admissions process.



## Internal DESS Students

For our DESS College Year 11 students we are committed to making the transition from Key Stage 4 to Key Stage 5 as seamless as possible and work hard to provide information, advice and guidance regarding Sixth Form from Year 9 onwards. Our transition programmes aptly termed Project 9.5, Project 10.5 and finally Project 11.5 are designed to build excitement about the prospect of Post-16 education and ensure that students and their families are equipped with the necessary knowledge to make positive decisions.

### Project 9.5

Although Year 9 is rightly dominated by GCSE Option choices, there is an element of ensuring that these choices will have a progressive impact on any potential decisions made at the end of Key Stage 4. Key principles are explained to parents including the impact of studying separate sciences on future medical pathways and the decision on which Mathematics tier to be entered for which can impact A Level subject choice in Maths and Science. It is important that students and parents understand where their GCSE options could lead and feel empowered to improve grades and work ethic if current performance could have future consequences on potential pathways Post-16.

### Project 10.5

In Year 10 the focus shifts to building excitement about DESS Sixth Form and students typically spend a week, whilst Year 12 are on work experience, experiencing the purpose-built Sixth Form facilities for the first time and gaining an insight into life as a DESS Year 12 student. During a week in May/June, all students are encouraged to begin to consider their choices, to understand the pre-requisite requirements for entry on to our multitude of different pathways and are provided with the opportunity to discover our library of Sixth Form videos and literature. Parents are invited to attend a meeting designed to answer any questions and to begin the process of thinking about the possibilities of life in DESS College Sixth Form for their son/ daughter whilst there is still time for them to improve their GCSE grades.

### Project 11.5

By Year 11, DESS students are well-versed in the attributes needed of a DESS Sixth Form student and are provided with monthly opportunities allowing them to confirm their final choices and lock in their places on our multiple courses. An outline of Project 11.5 can be found below.

## Internal Admissions

Outside of Information, Advice and Guidance, the DESS Admissions Department will support you in making the transition from Key Stage 4 to Key Stage 5.

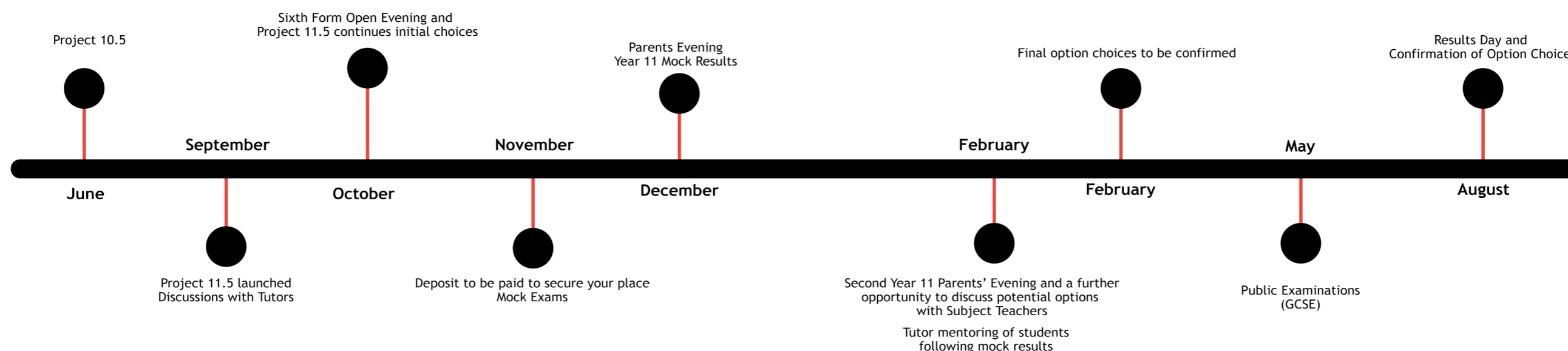
- All Year 11 internal students\* will be offered a place in our Sixth Form.
- Offers will be made during October 2024 and we ask that a non-refundable deposit of AED 3,000 is paid by Friday, 29th November 2024. The AED 3,000 deposit will be deducted from your first term's fees.
- Once the offer is paid and accepted, internal students will be offered information, advice and guidance to confirm their subject choices\*\*\*
- All subject choices should be confirmed by the end of February 2025 following Mock Examinations in November 2024 and the final Year 11 Parents' Evening in February 2025
- Internal applications made following the deposit deadline of 30th November 2024 will still be considered, but remaining places may have been offered to external students.
- All offers for Sixth Form places are subject to GCSE results. Students must attain the minimum GCSE grades (see Sixth Form Subject Brochure) for them to enrol on the desired A Level and Vocational courses.
- If a student fails to attain the necessary GCSE grades and we are unable to offer them a place at DESS College Sixth Form, they can request their deposit to be returned, this must be done in writing by 3pm UAE time on GCSE Results Day - Thursday, 21st August 2025.
- Students must confirm that they are taking up their place in the Sixth Form by 3pm UAE time on GCSE Results Day - Thursday, 21st August 2025, otherwise the place will be re-allocated to another student.
- All places are offered at the discretion of the Head of School.

\*A record of poor behaviour or a serious incident in KS4 could result in an offer for Sixth Form being revoked.

\*\*As per KHDA guidelines

\*\*\* The minimum entry criteria for subjects will be consistently applied. If the subject choices offered by the College are unacceptable to the student/parent a refund of the deposit will be considered.

# I'M STAYING - EXISTING DESS COLLEGE STUDENTS



# I'M JOINING - POTENTIAL DESS COLLEGE STUDENTS

As an increasingly popular choice for external students and with a high retention rate of our own Year 11 students, we have a limited number of Year 12 places available for August 2025. We are always thrilled to receive applications from students eager to immerse themselves in the DESS College Sixth Form experience and we welcome families to attend one of our weekly tours to really get an insight into what life is like in Year 12 and 13.

To apply please complete our online application form, a link to which can be found on our website. We will require a copy of your most recent school report, your mock GCSE results (where possible), a personal statement detailing why you would be a great fit for DESS College and a letter of recommendation from your Head of Year or Headteacher.

We accept applications year-round, however, at the start of Term 2 we will review all applications to date and begin to invite students for interview. Please note that not all students will be invited and we will inform you either way by Friday, 7th February 2025.

If you are invited for interview, we will ask you to pay a non-refundable Application Fee of AED 525 (inclusive of VAT). You should dress smartly (or choose to wear your current school uniform) and come ready to discuss your past achievements and future aspirations.

Following the interview, if you are offered a place a non-refundable deposit of AED 7,500 must be paid within seven days of the offer being sent. The AED 7,500 deposit will then be deducted from your first term's fees.

All offers of Sixth Form places are unconditional as DESS College will guarantee to find a suitable academic pathway for all students who are offered a place with us.

To access Level 3 courses, students must attain the minimum of 5 GCSE passes at Grade 4 or above. There are specific entry criteria to gain access on to A Level courses; please see our Entry Criteria for further details.



**Please note:** An original Transfer Certificate from the previous school is required to register a child with any school in the United Arab Emirates. Please ensure you request a Transfer Certificate from your current school if you are arriving from outside Dubai. Students transferring from schools within the UAE should give notice to the current school that they will be transferring and request a Transfer Certificate. Without a Transfer Certificate, a school is unable to register a student with the Ministry of Education and the student will not be able to attend school in the UAE. You should note that the certificate must not be dated more than three months prior to the date of entry to the new school.

## New Student Testimonial:

Name: **Ruby Mae Pearce**

Graduation Year: **2024/2025**

In September of 2023, I was moving from England to Dubai and starting at a brand-new school; DESS College. I was terrified to say the least! I was panicked about making friends, starting A-Levels, and settling into to this entirely new life, when I had only previously known the UK countryside. It is rare to move to a new country at 16, let alone changing school, and I was worried that people would have already established friend groups and would be unwilling to let me join. However, I could not have been more wrong, I felt so welcomed at DESS College Sixth Form.

I faced my most challenging period in October 2023. I was still settling in and, despite finding a lovely friendship group at school, felt slightly homesick. My initial response was to speak with my form tutor. She was extremely comforting and reminded me that I could always go to her when I needed someone to talk to. Over time I realised how lucky I was to be in this position, living in a new country and being taught at a school that genuinely cared for me as a pupil. From that point on I decided to make the most of every minute.

Today, after being at DESS College for just over a year, I am so grateful to the College. It has brought out the best in me as a student, and I am incredibly motivated to achieve academically. DESS College Sixth Form is different to most, in that it is not just a 'conveyor belt' for pupils. Staff genuinely care for you as a person, and do everything in their power to help you in any way they can. It is evident that they always go the extra mile, and I have felt this every day since the day that I joined.

My advice to those thinking of joining DESS College Sixth Form, is to throw yourself into every opportunity. Do not hesitate to put yourself outside of your comfort zone, you will grow so much as a person and a student. Within six months of being in Sixth form, I achieved the roll of Senior Prefect, because I said yes to applying for the roll. You have no idea how much you can achieve if you just say yes!

**“STAFF CARE FOR  
YOU AS A PERSON  
AND DO EVERYTHING  
IN THEIR POWER TO  
HELP YOU IN ANY  
WAY THEY CAN”**

# SIXTH FORM OPTIONS

## Option Blocks

With so much choice available, DESS College uses an option block system to ensure a tenable, bespoke timetable can be built for each individual student.

Please note the following key principles when making choices.

- There are 4 options blocks labelled from A-D
- 3 choices should be made from 3 of the 4 options blocks
- One option block should be kept free
- Arabic A students must keep either option block A or block C free
- Most academic subjects can be found in more than one option block
- For students with a grade 9 for GCSE Maths, Further Maths can be chosen in option block A and option block D together with a choice from either option block B or option block C
- Subjects with a \*\* next to them require a minimum of grade 7 at GCSE to ensure success at A Level. If iGCSE, students will require an 8 in Mathematics and an 8 in each separates science or 8/8 in combined science.

## Entry Criteria

DESS College is an inclusive College but morally driven to obtain the best outcomes for all of its students. Our Post-16, three A Level, Academic pathway is incredibly challenging and should only be pursued by those who have demonstrated the skills and knowledge at GCSE necessary to affirm potential success at the end of Year 13.

To this end, the following principles are consistently applied by the Sixth Form team providing information, advice and guidance to students/families unsure on what to choose.

- A grade 6 at GCSE or IGCSE is necessary to pursue a subject at A Level
- A minimum of grade 7 at GCSE is necessary to pursue Mathematics, Biology, Chemistry or Physics at A Level
- A minimum of grade 9 at GCSE is necessary to pursue Further Mathematics at A Level
- If Physics is chosen, Math should be chosen to compliment this choice
- A student should avoid choosing more than two subjects at A Level that they have not studied at GCSE

| OPTION BLOCK A  | OPTION BLOCK B                                    | OPTION BLOCK C   | OPTION BLOCK D                             |
|---|---|--|--|
| A LEVEL SUBJECTS  |   |  |  |
| Biology**   | Art   | Art Photography  | Arabic                                     |
| Business Studies  | Biology**   | Business Studies   | Art  |
| Chemistry**   | Business Studies                                  | Chemistry**  | AS Mathematics                             |
| Economics   | Chemistry**                                       | Computer Science   | Biology**                                  |
| English Language  | Computer Science                                  | Economics  | Business Studies                           |
| English Literature  | Economics   | English Literature   | Economics                                  |
| Further Mathematics*  | French  | Geography  | Further Mathematics*                       |
| Geography   | History   | Mathematics**  | Geography                                  |
| Mathematics**   | Information Technology                            | Media Studies  | History                                    |
| Politics  | Law   | Physical Education   | Law  |
| Psychology  | Mathematics**                                     | Physics**  | Mathematics**                              |
|   | Physics**   | Psychology   | Media Studies                              |
|   |   | Spanish  | Physics**                                  |
|   |   | DT – Product Design  | Physical Education                         |
|   |   |  | Politics                                   |
|   |   |  | Psychology                                 |
| VOCATIONAL COURSES (BTEC & RSL)   |   |  |  |
| OPTION BLOCK A  | OPTION BLOCK B                                    | OPTION BLOCK C   | OPTION BLOCK D                             |
| BTEC Enterprise & Entrepreneurship (EE)<br>Diploma (2 A level equivalent) |   | BTEC Creative Media Production<br>Diploma (2 A level equivalent) |  |
| BTEC Sport<br>Diploma (2 A level equivalent)                              |   | BTEC Sport<br>Diploma (2 A level equivalent)                     |  |
| BTEC EE Subsidiary Diploma  | BTEC Sport Subsidiary Diploma                     | BTEC Sport Subsidiary Diploma                                    | BTEC Creative Media Subsidiary Diploma     |
| BTEC Applied Science<br>Subsidiary Diploma                                | Music Practitioner (MUSPRA)<br>Subsidiary Diploma | BTEC Hospitality Subsidiary Diploma                              | BTEC Applied Science<br>Subsidiary Diploma |
| Creative & Performing Arts (CAPA)<br>Subsidiary Diploma                   | BTEC Travel & Tourism Subsidiary Diploma          |  |  |

\*Further Mathematics requires a 9 in Maths GCSE. This must be selected in Option Block A AND Option Block D.  
\*\*These subjects require a 7 in Mathematics and a 7 in each separate science or a 7/7 in combines science to study. If iGCSE, students will require an 8 in Mathematics and an 8 in each separates science or 8/8 in combined science.  
<sup>1</sup> May not be running in all blocks - will depend on numbers in the class  
Depending on numbers, all subjects and blocks may be subject to change.  
**All Arabic A and Islamic A students MUST Keep either Block A or Block C free.**

# DESS COLLEGE SIXTH FORM

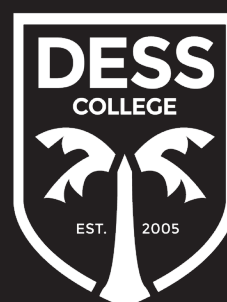
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