

# SJSF

Sleaford Joint  
Sixth Form

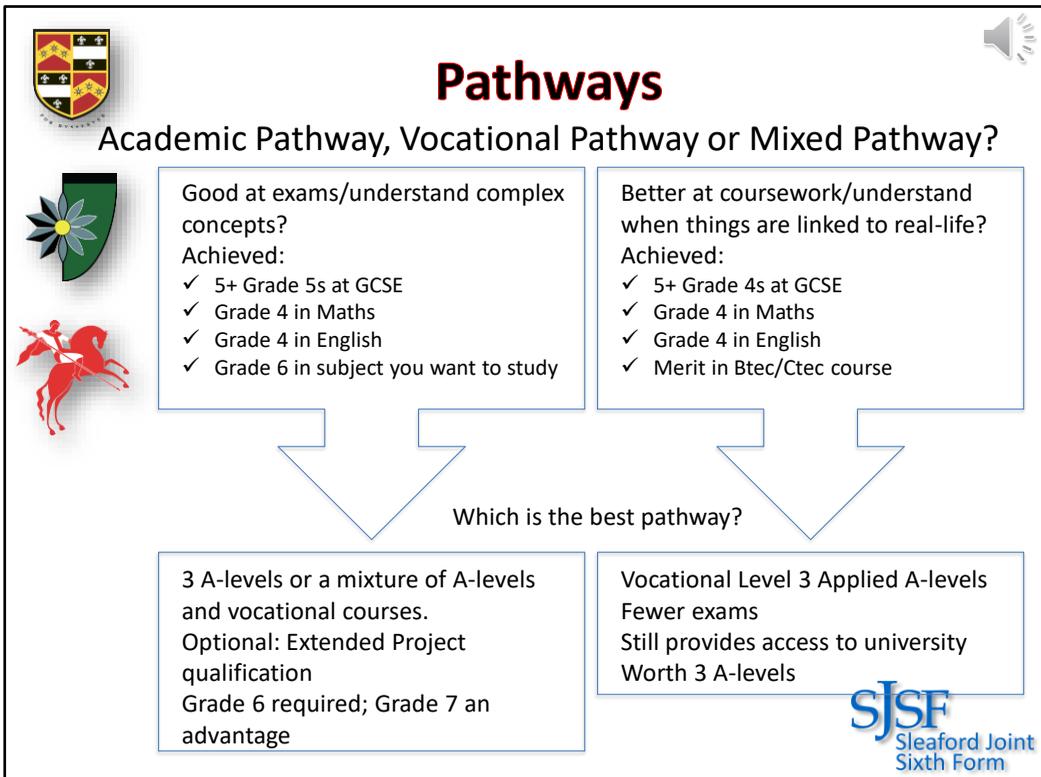
Choice - Opportunity - Success

## **Making Informed Choices**

In the SJSF, we take great pride in encouraging our young people to be aspirational and reflective, and to be prepared for the world that meets them beyond Sixth Form. The presentation seeks to provide an insight into the start of this journey, and to offer advice and guidance to support students to select the right courses and to explore their future aspirations.

I hope to provide some information on:

- the pathways on offer to your child
- the role of vocational courses in the SJSF
- what is required to access their preferred courses, and then...



Selecting the right courses is an essential first step in enabling our students to be successful in the Sixth Form. It is important that they think carefully about which subject is selected, why it has been selected and whether there is a genuine interest in the subject.

It's important that you carefully think about the right choices but, ultimately, it will be accessing the grades you need (coupled with your strong desire to study the subject) that is the most important first step.

We're fortunate in the Sleaford Joint Sixth Form that we have such a large number of course options. This is a major benefit of having three schools who collaborate so closely, as it means that subjects are likely to appear in more than one option block. This increases the chance that you can study the courses you would like to take.

Selecting the right pathway to maximise the likelihood of success at the end of Year 13 is very important.



## Traditional A-level Courses



- Most RCT students take traditional A-level courses, or a combination of 2 A-levels and 1 vocational course



- Tend to be more abstract than vocational courses
- Most popular route for those strongly considering university
- High examination component at the end of Key Stage 5

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The vast majority of our students take traditional A-levels, especially if performing well in examinations is not a concern for them. A-levels are arguably more closely linked to Higher Education and the demands of post-18 study, but this does not mean that universities consider them more favourably (in the vast majority of cases).

A-levels tend to be more abstract than vocational courses, as they tend to explore theoretical information and ideas which is not always fully applied to a practical context. This type of study is very closely related to the way students will study if they go to university, which is mostly coursework during the year but a heavy exam periods at the end of the course.

A high proportion of our students enjoy the academic rigor that comes with traditional A-level courses and are supported to develop their independent study habits so that they are well prepared when the exam season approaches.



## Vocational Courses



- Main difference is how the course is assessed
- 95% of universities and colleges in the UK accept vocational courses like any other, including competitive universities from the Russell Group
- Over 25% of RCT students study at least one vocational course (2021-22 academic year)
- In 2019, over a quarter of students accepted into higher education held at least one Btec/Ctec qualification at Key Stage 5 (UCAS, 2020)

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There's a myth that vocational courses are not as prestigious as academic A-levels. This is an old fashioned view.

There are still some Russell Group universities that maintain this stance, such as Oxford and Cambridge, and some academic courses that require a specific combination of A-levels, such as Medicine, Dentistry and Law, but the vast majority of courses and universities see vocational courses as the equivalent to A-levels. It's just a different way of studying.

Vocational courses are typically more coursework orientated, whereas A-levels are mostly geared towards a large exam component at the end of Year 13.

A Distinction in a vocational course is exactly the same weighting as a grade A in an A-level. Therefore, if exams are not your strong point, a vocational course is a very appropriate alternative.



# Entry Requirements



A summary of the entry requirements for each subject is in your prospectus pack

Note the:

- Overall requirements for Sixth Form
- Subject specific requirements

Academic A Level Pathway or Mixed Pathway of A levels and BTECs / CTECs: a minimum of 5 GCSEs full course at grade 5+ (or grade B) and at least Grade 4 in English Language or Literature and Maths.  
Level 3 Vocational/Applied Pathway: the equivalent of at least 5 subjects at Grade 4+ (or grade C), including English Language or Literature Grade 4+.

Subject	Students must also meet the individual additional requirements listed below for their chosen subjects
Applied BTEC Science, Single/Double	Grade 4 or above in GCSE Science
Art & Design CTEC Level 3	Merit at BTEC Level 2 or Grade 4 GCSE Art
Art & Design (Photography) CTEC	The minimum entry requirements for level 3 applied programmes
Art (Fine Art) A level	Grade 6 in GCSE Art plus a portfolio review
Art A Level (Photography)	Grade 6 or above in an Art/Creative specialism is required, in addition to meeting the minimum entry requirements for level 3 academic study
Biology	All students must have Grade 5+ in Maths owing to the considerable mathematical content of the new A Levels. It is strongly recommended also that students have attained Grade 7 or better in GCSE science subjects. The minimum entry requirements for Double Award Students are grades 6 and 7 in Science. The minimum entry requirements for Triple Award Students are 6 in Biology plus 6 in one other science. Performance in the exam components may be taken into account, given the 100% examined nature of the A Level.
Business A level	Grade 6 in English and Grade 5 in Maths
Business CTEC	Grade 4 Maths is required. English and Maths Grade 5 would be an advantage
Chemistry	All students must have Grade 5+ in Maths owing to the considerable mathematical content of the new A Levels. It is strongly recommended also that students have attained Grade 7 or better in GCSE science subjects. The minimum entry requirements for Double Award Students is 6 and 7 in Science. The minimum entry requirements for Triple Award Students are 6 in Chemistry plus 6 in one other science and performance in the exam components may be taken into account, given the 100% examined nature of the A Level.
Childcare and Education	The minimum entry requirements for Level 3 programmes
Computer Science	Grade 6 Maths
Construction and the Built Environment	Grade 4 in English and Maths
Drama	Grade 5 English plus audition
English Language	Grades 6 in English Literature or English language AND grade 5 in English literature or English Language



The next part of this presentation is very important. The entry requirements document is included in your prospectus pack for reference this evening.

In the past, some students have not always been careful enough to identify all of the entry requirements for both:

- Entry to the SJSF, and
- Entry requirements for the subjects you have selected.

To get a place in the SJSF, there are certain requirements. To study A-level subjects (this is the academic pathway), the entry requirements are 5 or more grade 5s at GCSE (which are full course) including a grade 4 in English and a grade 4 in Maths. The vocational pathway is at least 4 GCSEs at grade 4, including a grade 4 in English and Maths.

If you achieve the entry requirements for a place in the SJSF, there are then subject-specific entry requirements. For example, if you want to study **Business** in the SJSF, you will need to have achieved:

- A grade 6 in English and a grade 5 in Maths.
- And have met the entry requirements for the academic pathway.



## 'Gateway' Subjects



- Some subjects are regarded as a 'gateway' subject as they enable progression to some Key Stage 5 courses



- English and Mathematics in particular!
- Refer to the Entry Requirements document to see if a grade in a gateway subject is needed



English and Maths are both regarded as 'gateway subjects' as you are often required to get a grade 6 or higher in a subject you want to study, but you will also usually need a grade 6 in English and/or Maths.

With the example provided for Business A-level, notice that the grade in English and Maths are higher than the general entry requirements to access a place in the SJSF.

Some subjects, such as the Biology, will require a grade 6 or higher in the subject, as well as a grade 6 in another subject. Biology does, however, state that a grade 7 is strongly recommended. Students who study a Science or Maths (for instance) who do not access the grade we strongly recommend usually find the subject very challenging, and you've got two full years of 5-hours a week of lessons to navigate those struggles.



## Just Because You Can...



"I can't believe I got a 7 in my Maths mock, I might do Maths at A-level"



"I've got a grade 6 in Biology. They want a grade 7 but how hard can it be?"

"Psychology is a new course. I fancy trying something new"

"Why would I do Ctec Sport when I can do A-Level PE?"



## Doesn't Mean You Should!

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If subjects are required to access your Post-18 aspirations, then it makes more sense to study them...but it is important to explore whether you can still achieve your next steps without them? One student this year has a place to study Physiotherapy at University by doing double Ctec Sport and Ctec Business – both on the vocational pathway.

There's a lot to be said for studying the subjects you enjoy. If you're interested, you'll remain engaged and are likely to perform better.

New courses are appealing, but be careful. It may be that you're not yet aware of the difficulties and problems yet.

Fully investigate the applied route. You get exactly the same UCAS points for a Distinction in Ctec Sport as you do for A-level PE. This is also the case for other vocational courses. Make sure you fully investigate which course is best suited to you. Don't make life any harder than it needs to be.



## Early Applicant Guidance



- Students considering Oxbridge, Medicine, Veterinary Medicine and Dentistry.
- UCAS deadline is 15 October (in Year 13)
- GCSE results are important (grades 7-9)
- Strong performance required in Year 12 (high predicted grades)
- Related work experience is essential
- Evidence of serious and sustained interest is needed
- Consider course combinations required (UCAS website)

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If you're considering studying at Oxbridge, or taking a course in Medicine, Veterinary Medicine or Dentistry...you will have just over a year to be ready to submit your UCAS application. All the help, guidance and support will be there for you but your GCSE results will also be consulted as part of the application. If this is your post-18 pathway, you should be:

- Working to achieve GCSEs at grade 7 and above in your subjects
- Making plans to access relevant work experience to support your application
- Developing your skills by participating in super-curricular activities, by showcasing your academic curiosity beyond your subjects.



## Making the Most of this Evening



- Talk to staff and students about their subject

- Consider post-18 aspirations, courses and routes



- Reflect upon current performance and likely GCSE outcomes

- Explore subjects that give the greatest likelihood of success

- Sleaford Town enrichment talk/stand (St George's Main Hall, 7pm) – football and A-levels



From those of you who are able to attend the Open Evening in person, it is an opportunity to speak to staff and students to start to decide which subjects you might wish to study, and whether the courses align with your strengths. Even if you're not in attendance this evening, I would encourage you to ask questions, get the perspectives from our students and start to explore whether the subjects truly help you to get to your next steps prior to submitting your application form in November.



## What Next?



- Consult the prospectus pack
- Submit your application by **Friday 19 November**
- Talk to your form tutor to discuss your thoughts
- Subject Mentoring/Counselling **after Christmas**
- Be aware of the **individual subject entry requirements**
- Select subjects that align to your interests, post-18 thoughts and that you're likely to succeed in
- Look on the UCAS website to identify the entry requirements for university or apprenticeship courses
- Consider, and don't discount, all options from all pathways
- SJSF Induction Event in **June 2022**



Applications to the SJSF are due in by Friday 19 November. An application form is included within the pack that you have received this evening, along with a prospectus which documents course details and areas of study within the specification.

You should consult the entry requirements sheet and reflect upon whether you would be able to receive a place on your chosen courses if your most recent set of progress grades were the 'real thing'. This may provide you with the motivation you need to truly achieve your potential.

All students will receive a one-to-one mentoring conversation with a member of the Sixth Form team after Christmas, and will be able to trial your chosen courses in June prior to the start of the academic year.

This evening is a first step for many of you to identify what might be the best subjects to open doorways to your post-18 aspirations.



Thank you for listening.

Our Senior Prefects are available around the site to help direct you to subject areas.

You will also notice that subjects are split between the two Robert Carre Trust sites and we would encourage you to visit both schools and speak to staff and students in subject areas.

If you're unable to attend in person this evening, we would encourage you to be proactive in asking questions, looking at the course content in the specification and to consider which subjects are best suited to you achieving the grades that will open doorways in the future.

Enjoy your evening. Thank you.