





SIXTH FORM



















CLASS OF 2029

DESS.SCH.AE

DESS
EST. 1963

WELCOME

TO DESS COLLEGE SIXTH FORM

WELCOME FROM THE HEADTEACHER

Your Next Chapter Starts Here

Thank you for considering DESS College for the next stage of your education. This is a pivotal moment; the bridge between school and what comes next, between being guided and leading yourself.

We offer one of the most extensive A Level and BTEC programmes in the region, designed to meet you where you are and take you exactly where you need to go. Whether that is university, an apprenticeship, employment, or another path entirely, our curriculum is built to open doors.

Our Sixth Form operates on a different rhythm. You are treated as young adults. That means more freedom, more responsibility and more trust. You will have your own facilities. Your own space. Your own voice within the College. But you are still part of the DESS family, still expected to lead, mentor and set the standard for the rest of the College community.

Preparing you for the next step is embedded in everything we do. Our IAG (Information, Advice and Guidance) team provides expert support through every stage, whether that is university applications, apprenticeship routes or career pathways. We have strong links with universities globally and a strong track record of students progressing to leading institutions and opportunities across the UK, USA, Canada, Australia, Europe and beyond.

Our Sixth Form facilities are truly exceptional; I am sure that when you see these for yourself you will agree and want to be 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.

This is a great time to be in Sixth Form at DESS College. You will be pushed. You will be supported. You will be given the tools, the teaching and the space to become whoever you are working to be.

I hope this brochure gives you a sense of what is possible here. But nothing beats seeing it in person.

Matthew Cotgrove
Headteacher



WELCOME FROM THE HEAD OF SIXTH FORM

Built to Prepare You

Our Sixth Form is built on three pillars:

- **Academic excellence with exceptional pastoral care**
- **Outstanding provision rooted in real experiences**
- **Clear transitions supported by world-class guidance**

Students come to us from all over the world and leave with the grades and confidence to go anywhere. This year, 28% of our graduates are studying at Russell Group universities, including nine of the top ten in the UK. Others have chosen universities in the UAE, the US, Canada, and Europe. What matters isn't just where they go, it's that they're ready when they get there.

Our goal is to help students build the emotional resilience that carries them through exams, applications, and everything that comes after. And we stay in touch. Our Alumni programme means we're still here, still interested, long after they've left.

The Sixth Form Centre is designed to support how senior students actually live and work: independent study, collaboration, downtime, debate. It's not unusual to walk through and find a society meeting in one corner, a university prep session in another, and a group of students just working through a problem together over coffee.

Beyond lessons, our enrichment programme is deliberately ambitious. We call it the Super Curriculum, and it's built to stretch, challenge, and expose students to opportunities they might not have considered. Sport, performance, competition, leadership; there's a platform for it here.

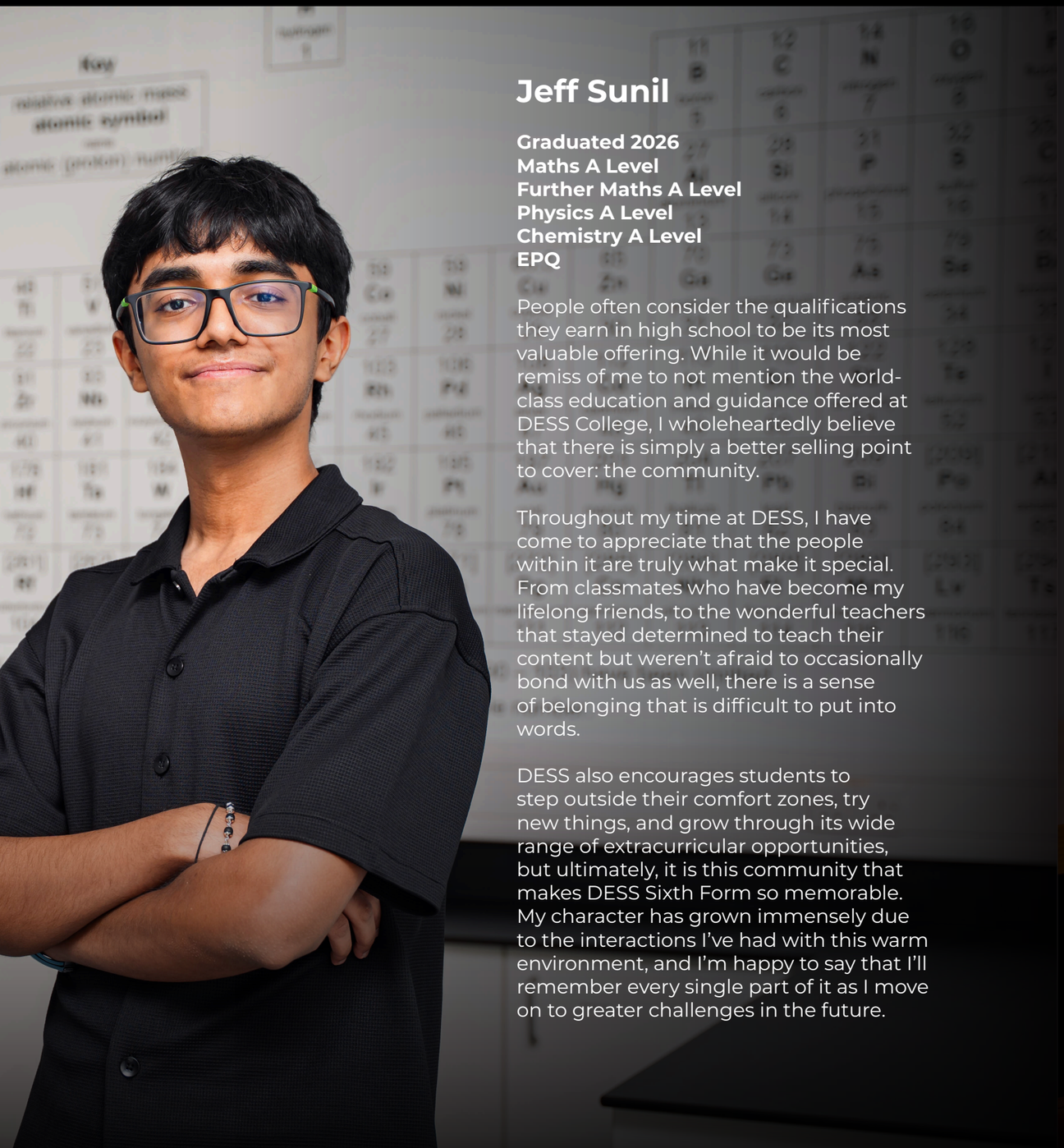
Sixth Form is a gateway. Our job is to make sure it opens as many doors as possible. Our IAG and Higher Education teams work closely with students and families to explore career paths, university options, and post-18 routes - whatever form they take.

From the first conversation about subject choices to results day and beyond, we look forward to working with the class of 2029.

Keely Vernon-Ward
Head of Sixth Form



STUDENT TESTIMONIALS



Jeff Sunil

Graduated 2026
Maths A Level
Further Maths A Level
Physics A Level
Chemistry A Level
EPQ

People often consider the qualifications they earn in high school to be its most valuable offering. While it would be remiss of me to not mention the world-class education and guidance offered at DESS College, I wholeheartedly believe that there is simply a better selling point to cover: the community.

Throughout my time at DESS, I have come to appreciate that the people within it are truly what make it special. From classmates who have become my lifelong friends, to the wonderful teachers that stayed determined to teach their content but weren't afraid to occasionally bond with us as well, there is a sense of belonging that is difficult to put into words.

DESS also encourages students to step outside their comfort zones, try new things, and grow through its wide range of extracurricular opportunities, but ultimately, it is this community that makes DESS Sixth Form so memorable. My character has grown immensely due to the interactions I've had with this warm environment, and I'm happy to say that I'll remember every single part of it as I move on to greater challenges in the future.



Akansha Julie

Graduated 2021
Drama A Level
Psychology A Level
Media Studies A Level

Growing up, studying at DESS was always a dream of mine. The school's prestigious reputation was something I had always admired, so becoming a student here felt incredibly special. My time at DESS became about so much more than academics; it was where I made lifelong friends, built meaningful connections and created memories I still carry with me today.

The support and guidance I received from my teachers and the wider DESS community shaped my experience and gave me a strong foundation for what came next. I went on to study Media Production in Manchester, a dream I didn't even know I had until it became a reality. I'll always be grateful for the role DESS Sixth Form played in helping me get there.

Returning to DESS Sixth Form as a Content Creator has been a nostalgic experience. Being back in a place that played such an important role in my journey feels like a real full-circle moment, almost like it was meant to be. I'm incredibly grateful to now have the opportunity to give back to the community that gave me so much.

THE JOURNEY

Two Years That Shape Everything

Staff Vs Student Sport › Graduation & Prom › MVP Portfolio › Silent Disco › RISE Week › MVP Award › Future Focus › SSLT Search › End of Year Exams › Careers Week › Prize Day › Work Experience (Project 12.5) › Last First Day › Study Skills › Senior Sunrise › Senior Trip › Mock Exams › Senior Sunset ›

BELONGING

Our Campus

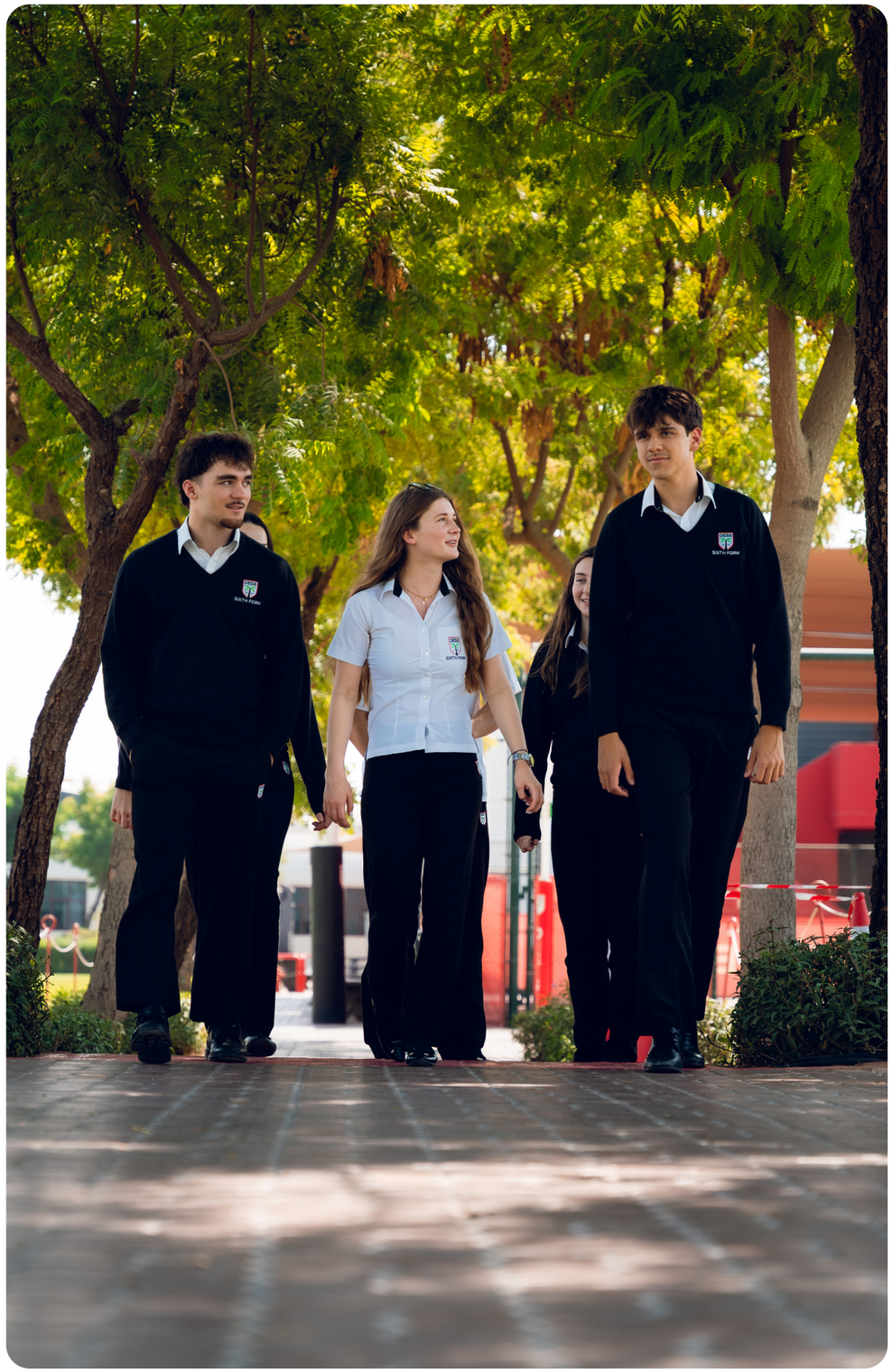
DESS College Sixth Form students benefit from a purpose-built Sixth Form Centre, which provides various independent learning spaces for private or collaborative study. At its heart is an extensive communal social area with all-day dining, wellness rooms, a high-performance gym, and a central courtyard.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

Our Students

Study forms a generous portion of daily life for our DESS College Sixth Form students. But studying at this level is different from anything they've experienced before, and we work with them to understand the science of learning and improve their study habits. Unlike GCSE or IB, students take fewer subjects. The depth, though, is incomparable. It allows them to truly immerse themselves in areas they're passionate about. We're well-equipped to support students who find the transition challenging, using coaching and mentoring to ensure they meet the pace and demands of Level 3 courses and eventually thrive independently. Sixth Form students become lifelong learners, prepared for further study at university or in the world of work.

Overall Experience

We provide everything a young person needs to flourish during their most formative years. It shapes the adult they're becoming and equips them with the skills, knowledge, and emotional intelligence to make good choices. Ultimately, they leave with a lasting impression of what education can be. Through our range of personalised pathways, we create a curriculum that works for the widest range of students. All succeed. All are supported. And all look back on their Sixth Form years with warmth and fondness.



PATHWAYS

SIXTH FORM

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.

PATHWAYS

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 alongisde extraordinary experiences.

The three pathways at DESS College Sixth Form are Academic, Vocational or Blended. Students pursuing our Academic route can select from 25 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 Blended 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 examination, after two years of study, whilst vocational courses 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.

Academic Pathway	3 A LEVEL SUBJECTS = 3
Vocational Pathway A	1 BTEC DIPLOMA (Worth 2) / 1 BTEC SUB DIPLOMA (Worth 1) = 3
Vocational Pathway B	3 BTEC SUB DIPLOMAS (Worth 1 each) = 3
Mixed Pathway	2 A LEVEL SUBJECTS & 1 BTEC SUB DIPLOMA (Worth 1) = 3
Mixed Pathway A	1 A LEVEL SUBJECT & 1 BTEC DIPLOMA (Worth 2) = 3
Mixed Pathway C	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 2025-2026, 56% of all DESS College A Level grades were awarded at A or A* and 80% 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

We are proud to offer a growing range of BTEC International Diplomas, BTEC Subsidiary Diplomas, 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 2025-2026, 93% achieved D* to D, 100% of students passed. Both statistics are significantly above UK averages and demonstrative of 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
RSL - Creative & Performing Arts (CAPA)
RSL - Music Practitioner (MUSPRA)

WHY THREE SUBJECTS?

The majority of university offers are based on three subjects. Offers to even the most prestigious universities in the world tend to be three A* grades. But the choice of three is also conducive to a well-rounded Sixth Form experience, allowing time to enrich a student's timetable with enrichment activities and access to 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	6 Hours Of Independent Study	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 the Sixth Form experience, equipping students with skills they'll need at university and beyond. 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 wellbeing during the formative years of a student's life. Only students that have achieved level 8 and 9 across all of their GCSE results will be considered for a four-option pathway.

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.



BESPOKE PATHWAYS

Proud to be an inclusive College with a diverse student body, we've developed four specific pathways for students who are Emirati, planning to study in Australia or South Africa, Arabic passport holders, or are exceptionally academic. Each pathway is designed to make the transition from Key Stage Four to Key Stage Five as smooth as possible.

Emirati

DESS College welcomes Emirati families and ensures they're provided with the necessary information, advice, and guidance regarding equivalency so they can confidently pursue their chosen Sixth Form pathway. Equivalency refers to British Curriculum public examinations being recognised by the UAE Ministry of Education, resulting in a Leavers Certificate that allows the bearer to continue their study in the UAE or access government employment.

Decree 199 states that Emirati students must pass five GCSE subjects (for equivalency, a "pass" is Level 3 and above). They must also pass either two AS Level or one A Level subject with a grade between A* and E. BTEC Level 3 Diploma can now be equivalised to the MOE vocational Secondary Education Certificate, providing the student meets the following conditions:

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

Looking beyond DESS, the EMSAT is no longer the only accepted university admission test in English and Maths. Emirati students will receive tailored information and guidance for admission tests and available pathways during their journey at Sixth Form. Please see the equivalency subjects to be studied by Emirati students on the page opposite.

*Please note that this information may be subject to change.

Arabic A

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

Equivalency Subjects

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



Australia and South Africa

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

Exceptionally Academic

DESS College Sixth Form attracts students of extraordinary intellectual ability. For those students, a four A Level academic pathway may be suitable. With pastoral care at the heart of our decision-making at DESS College, a set of guidelines allows families to consider whether this pathway suits their son or daughter and protects the student's interests. To consider this pathway, a student would typically obtain Level 8 and 9 across the board at GCSE.

LIFE

SIXTH FORM

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.

WHAT SETS US APART

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 aim to ignite our students' self-development in academics, cultural and social engagement, and a growing confidence in their individual identity. We're 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 those 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 these 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 support the academic 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 in any areas where they may be struggling. The Student Manager mentors students, providing them with the skills and strategies needed for autonomous and independent study. For students who may need additional wellbeing support, our resident Student Counsellors are an important aspect of our exceptional wellbeing provision at Sixth Form. Through 1:1 sessions, the Student Manager alongside the Student Counsellors guarantee that even with a large cohort, every student has access to someone to help care for their wellbeing, 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 bring the Sixth Form together in song and laughter at the end of a 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 term 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 everyday 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 factual 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 its 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 they are always welcome back but also with memories and friendships that will last well into adulthood. Events for the last few weeks of Year 13 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

Playing To Your Strengths

DESS College Sixth Formers are not 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.

Extended Project Qualification (EPQ)

For students interested in extending their knowledge of a specific subject, we offer the EPQ. This qualification provides an opportunity to extend abilities beyond the classroom and to prepare for university or a future career. Students have the choice of writing a 5,000-word dissertation with academic referencing or constructing 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. 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.

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.

LAMDA Grade 8 Speaking in Public

The LAMDA Grade 8 Speaking in Public course offers students the opportunity to develop advanced communication skills through the preparation and delivery of speeches. It encourages clarity of thought, confidence in presentation, and the ability to engage an audience effectively. Students explore both prepared and impromptu speaking, with a focus on structure, style, and persuasive techniques. This qualification is recognised for its rigour and can contribute to UCAS points.



SUPER SOCIETIES

Run By Students For Students

In the spirit of developing a university feel, 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 of their subjects. The DESS College Sixth Form Societies are run by students, for students - and they are widely regarded as one of the most rewarding aspects of Sixth Form life.

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.

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.
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
- Model United Nations (MUN)
- History Society
- Psychology Society
- Law Society

Public Speaking:

- Debating
- Tedx DESS Youth

Maths:

- Maths Society
- Why Equations are Beautiful

Creative:

- Media Society

Business:

- Business and Economics
- Desconomic Review

Science and Technology:

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



STUDENT LEADERSHIP

Lead. Mentor. Shape the Future

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

Student Leadership And Innovation

DESS College Sixth Form understands that true leadership is not about a badge or a title. Through self-development programmes 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 time as a Sixth Former, often centring around opportunities for service in the community and mentoring.

SSLT

The SSLT, or Senior Student 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.

Leadership is arguably the most beneficial activity a student can pursue beyond 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.







LIFE BEYOND

SIXTH FORM

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.

POST-DESS
ACADEMIC PATHWAYS

Your Route. Your Choice

Sixth Form precedes a period of major change. It marks the end of a student's long association with the school and the beginning 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 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 ambition to ability is all part of the preparation process.

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

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 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

Europe and Rest of the World

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 they wish to pursue. Provision for Europe & the Rest of the World also includes:

- Tailored 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. Tailored presentations are given by the universities to mirror the student application process.

Parental Engagement

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

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.



Mitchell Burke
Sixth Form Transition Manager



Christine Dunne
Higher Education Coordinator



Peter Flynn
Academic Enrichment Manager

POST-DESS DESTINATIONS 2026

DESS College Sixth Form is incredibly proud of its 243 students who graduated in 2026. 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 nearly a third of students at Russell Group Universities in the UK. We placed students at 9 of the top 10 UK Universities (as referenced in the UK Times). The UAE continues to be a popular destination with 10% of students electing to stay in the UAE for further study. In addition, students continue to be drawn to North America with students placed at prestigious universities such as Stanford, New York University and Cornell.

UCL
University of Oxford
Loughborough University
The University Of Sheffield.
University of Bath
Durham University
university of groningen
Swansea University Prifysgol Abertawe
King's College London
MANCHESTER 1824 The University of Manchester
The University of British Columbia
University of Exeter
University of Cambridge
Imperial College London
UIC University of Illinois Chicago
University of Waterloo
University of Leeds
University of Toronto
NTU Nottingham Trent University
University of Birmingham
Royal Holloway University of London
University of St Andrews
LSE
WARWICK The University of Warwick
جامعة نيويورك ابوظبي NYU ABU DHABI
University of York
Universiteit Leiden
University of Bristol
Queen Mary University of London
USC University of Southern California
University of Nottingham UK | CHINA | MALAYSIA
University of Southampton
University of Birmingham Dubai



INFORMATION, ADVICE & GUIDANCE (IAG)

The IAG team supports students throughout Sixth Form, helping them explore possibilities, build experiences and make choices that are right for them, through 1:1 meeting, tutor time activities and much more.

There is no single route to success after DESS College. We recognise that every student is different and their journey after school will be too. While university may be the right choice for some, others may choose a vocational or foundation programme, enter employment, take a gap year, develop their skills and experience, or explore entrepreneurship. Our role is not to direct students towards one pathway. It is to help them understand themselves, explore the opportunities available and make informed, confident decisions about what comes next.

We want students to explore widely, build meaningful experiences, understand themselves and develop the confidence to make informed decisions about their future.

Students are exposed to a range of opportunities designed to connect them to real-life contexts. Our programme has included industry speakers from sectors such as law, finance, dentistry, veterinary science, marketing, sport and event management, alongside employer encounters, university visits and specialist workshops.

Students are encouraged to experience opportunities for themselves. This can include traditional work experience, virtual experiences, online courses, university workshops, employer projects and networking events. Through our careers programme, students have visited workplaces including hospitals, engineering companies, law firms and aviation facilities, giving them first-hand insight into different industries and working environments.



More than Careers Advice

Throughout Sixth Form, students can access:

- **Industry Speakers**
- **Work Experience**
- **University Experiences**
- **Virtual Experiences**
- **Networking**
- **Unifrog**
- **Applications and CVs**
- **1:1 Guidance**



Olivia Davidson
Head of IAG



Fiona Gibbs
IAG Coodinator

ADMISSIONS

SIXTH FORM

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

EXISTING DESS STUDENTS

Internal DESS Students

For our DESS College Year 11 students, we are committed to making the transition from Key Stage Four to Key Stage Five as smooth as possible. We 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.

Internal Admissions

Outside of information, advice, and guidance, the DESS Admissions Team 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 Term 1 2026, and we ask that a non-refundable deposit of AED 3,000 is paid by Friday, 27th November 2026. The AED 3,000 deposit will be deducted from your first term's fees in Year 12.
- 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 2027.
- Internal applications made following the deposit deadline of 27th November 2026 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 to be enrolled on their desired A Level and Vocational courses.
- Students must confirm that they are taking up their place in DESS College Sixth Form by 3pm UAE time on GCSE Results Day.

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



Project 10.5	Project 11.5 launched and discussion with tutors	Sixth Form Open Day and Project 11.5 continues	Deposit to secure your place and Mock Exams	Parents Evening and Year 11 Mock Results	Second Year 11 Parents Evening	Final option choices to be confirmed	Public Examinations (GCSE)	Results Day and Confirmation of Option Choices
June	**September**	**October**	**November**	**December**	**February**	**February**	**May**	**August**

NEW DESS STUDENTS

With a high current retention rate of our Year 11 students, we have a limited number of Year 12 places available for August 2027. 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 Sixth Form, and a letter of recommendation from your Head of Year or Headteacher.

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. Our application window will officially close on Friday, 12th March 2027.

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 in Year 12. 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 a minimum of 5 GCSE passes at Grade 4 or above. There are specific entry criteria to gain access 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 their 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.



Aisling Hubert
Admissions Manager



Melanie Duncan
Registrar Support

Now
Applications Open

October
Open Evening

January
Interviews and Offers

August
Results Day

SIXTH FORM OPTIONS

Building Your Timetable

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

Please note the following key principles when making choices:

- There are 4 option blocks labelled from A-D
- 3 choices should be made from 3 of the 4 option blocks ie. 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 Level 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

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 necessary at GCSE 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 unsure on what to choose:

- To study any A Level subject, students must have achieved at least a Level 6 at GCSE or iGCSE. However, for English, Mathematics, Biology, Chemistry, and Physics, a Level 7 is required.
- Students that have studied an iGCSE qualification will require an 8 in Mathematics and an 8 in each separate Science or 8/8 in Combined Science
- A minimum of Level 9 at GCSE is necessary to pursue Further Mathematics at A Level
- 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	DT – Product Design	Business Studies
English Literature	Economics	Economics	Economics
Further Mathematics*	English Language	English Literature	Further Mathematics*
Geography	French	Geography	Geography
Mathematics	History	Mathematics	History
Politics	Law	Media Studies	Law
Psychology	Mathematics	Physical Education	Mathematics
	Physics	Physics	Media Studies
		Psychology	Physical Education
		Spanish	Physics
			Politics
			Psychology
VOCATIONAL COURSES (BTEC & RSL)			
OPTION BLOCK A	**OPTION BLOCK B**	**OPTION BLOCK C**	**OPTION BLOCK D**
BTEC Enterprise & Entrepreneurship (EE) Diploma (2 A level equivalent)		BTEC Creative Media Production Diploma (2 A level equivalent)	
BTEC Sport Diploma (2 A level equivalent)		BTEC Sport Diploma (2 A level equivalent)	
BTEC EE Subsidiary Diploma	BTEC Sport Subsidiary Diploma	BTEC Sport Subsidiary Diploma	BTEC Applied Science Subsidiary Diploma
Creative & Performing Arts (CAPA) Subsidiary Diploma	Music Practitioner (MUSPRA) Subsidiary Diploma	BTEC Hospitality Subsidiary Diploma	BTEC Creative Media Subsidiary Diploma
BTEC Applied Science Subsidiary Diploma	BTEC Travel & Tourism Subsidiary Diploma	Music Practitioner (MUSPRA) Subsidiary Diploma	

* Further Mathematics requires a 9 in Maths GCSE. This must be selected in Option Block A **and** Option Block D.
All subjects listed above are subject to meeting minimum requirements. Please refer to the minimum grade requirement document.
All Arabic A and Islamic A students MUST keep either Block A or Block C free.
Please note that the subject blocks may be subject to change.

Minimum Grade Requirements for KS5 Subjects: 2026-27

SUBJECT NAME	MINIMUM GRADE REQUIRED AT GCSE IN THAT SUBJECT	MUST HAVE STUDIED AT GCSE	ADDITIONAL SUBJECTS REQUIRED	ADDITIONAL INFORMATION
Art	6	Yes		
Arabic	6	Yes		
Biology	7	Yes - Single and Double Award accepted	GCSE Maths: Grade 7+	For Double Award: Grade 7/7+ and GCSE Maths: Grade 7+ For iGCSE: Grade 8+
Business Studies	6	No		If not studied at GCSE: GCSE Maths: Grade 6+ and GCSE English: Grade 6+
Chemistry	7	Yes - Single and Double Award accepted	GCSE Maths: Grade 7+	For Double Award: Grade 7/7+ and GCSE Maths: Grade 7+ For iGCSE: Grade 8+
Computer Science	6	Yes		
Design & Technology	6	Yes		
Economics	6	No		If not studied at GCSE: GCSE Maths: Grade 6+ and GCSE English: Grade 6+
English Language	7	Yes		
English Literature	7	Yes		
French	6	Yes		
Further Maths	9	No	GCSE Maths: Grade 9 (90%+)	
Geography	6	Yes		
History	6	Yes		
Law	6	No		If not studied at GCSE: GCSE English: Grade 6+ or GCSE History: Grade 6+
AS Mathematics	6	Yes		
Mathematics	7	Yes		For iGCSE: Grade 8+
Media Studies	6	No		If not studied at GCSE: GCSE English: Grade 6+
Photography	6	No		If not studied at GCSE: Photography portfolio required
Physical Education	6	Yes	GCSE Biology Grade 6+ or Double Award 6/6	
Physics	7	Yes - Single and Double Award accepted	GCSE Maths: Grade 7+	Must be taken with A level Maths. For Double Award: Grade 7/7+ and GCSE Maths: Grade 7+ For iGCSE: Grade 8++
Politics	6	No		If not studied at GCSE: GCSE English: Grade 6+ or GCSE History: Grade 6+
Psychology	6	No		If not studied at GCSE: GCSE Maths: Grade 6+ and GCSE English: Grade 6+
Spanish	6	Yes		
VOCATIONAL COURSES				
All BTEC and RSL courses: Enterprise & Entrepreneurship / Creative Media Production / Sport / Travel & Tourism / Hospitality / Applied Science / CAPA / MUSPRA			5 GCSE's Grade 5+ (including English and Maths)	



DESS COLLEGE SIXTH FORM

CLASS OF 2029

Academic City, Dubai, UAE
+971 4 360 4866
www.dess.sch.ae