

# CURRICULUM POLICY

---

|                       |                              |
|-----------------------|------------------------------|
| Date of Policy        | September 2021               |
| Approved by Principal | September 2020               |
| Next Review Date      | August 2022                  |
| Lead for Review       | Assistant Principal Academic |

## Course Delivery

Students' knowledge and understanding are developed through a blend of classroom lessons, coursework (both assessed and non-assessed) and personal tutorials. Additional support is provided through self-access facilities such as the Personalised Learning Centre, the ALS department, Canvas (the VLE) and online resources.

Emphasis is placed on developing the CATS Characteristics aiming to equip students with attributes which include being caring, resilient, open-minded, critical thinking and excellent communicators. Approaches also encourage students to become independent learners able to reflect on their learning, recognise, and react appropriately to their own strengths and areas for development.

Teaching is conducted in English (except in foreign-language subjects, i.e. MFL), and students are encouraged to use English whenever possible on college premises. In relation to all of its programmes, the College specifies a minimum level of English language ability (IELTS 5.0 for A Level, 5.5 for IB, 4.5 for UFP and 4.0 for Pre Programme and GCSE Courses). (See the College Prospectus for other courses), usually expressed in terms of an IELTS score that it believes is necessary for students proposing to join a particular course.

Subject matter for each class should be appropriate to the capabilities of each student including those with a care plan or with additional learning needs. Schemes of Work are available for every subject area. Students acquire speaking, listening, literacy and numeracy skills appropriate to the course they are enrolled on.

The aim of the academic staff is to select and implement strategies that are most appropriate to each module and group, while preparing the students for the methodologies and techniques to which they will be exposed at the next phase of their education, including at university. Course delivery involves a mix of classroom lessons, lectures, workshops, seminars and one-to-one tutorials, group work, discussions and self-study. Practical lessons are encouraged in relevant subjects, e.g. the Sciences, Art, Geography.

## Ethos and Values

Lessons will encourage respect for others paying particular regard to the protected characteristics set out in the 2010 Equalities Act. Students should receive an effective preparation for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of life in British society including civil and criminal law and the ability to distinguish the difference between right and wrong. Students will be taught in ways which do not undermine the fundamental British values of democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty and mutual respect and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs.

## Programmes

### PRE Programme – in preparation for IB, A Level or University Foundation

Students generally study up to 9 subjects, including mathematics and English on this one- year programme. The course can include taking Maths iGCSE or other exams as appropriate. Students

who are taking this course are usually under UK statutory school leaving age and so are exposed to a range of experiences over a one-year programme.

These experiences will cover linguistic, mathematical, scientific, technological, human and social, physical\*, aesthetic and creative fields, along with two sessions a week of PSHE/RSE (PT). They will also have technology and enterprise experiences during their course and will acquire skills in speaking and listening, literacy and numeracy.

There will inevitably be a strong focus on ESL for students, bearing in mind the vital importance of equipping them with language skills to benefit from the range of courses available to them at the college. English and subject specific language development will be delivered within ESL teaching, personal tutor lessons and subject classes.

Extension and stretch activities are available for all students, which include a range of sport/exercise opportunities, social activities, trips and visits, clubs and societies and student leadership positions, all available over the course of the year. The course is a rolling programme and students can be across the academic year while there are still places.

\*Students complete the Bronze Duke of Edinburgh award as part of their weekly timetable. This involves physical recreation, adventurous journey, skills and service modules. In addition, football, basketball, running and futsal clubs and Saturday sports activities run weekly for students to attend.

### **CATS GCSE**

A CATS two-year GCSE course is offered to students at age 14 in Canterbury. Students on this course will take GCSEs/iGCSEs in up to 7 subjects. As an alternative to taking GCSE in the second year, students who are better suited, academically or with regards to English language abilities, can transfer to the PRE Programme for the second year. They would then progress to A Level, IB or UFP as appropriate.

Student experiences across the two years will cover linguistic, mathematical, scientific, technological, human and social, physical\*, aesthetic and creative fields, along with two sessions a week of PSHE/RSE (PT). They will also have technology and enterprise experiences during their course and will acquire skills in speaking and listening, literacy and numeracy.

Extension and stretch activities are available for all students, which include a range of sport/exercise opportunities, social activities, trips and visits, clubs and societies and student leadership positions, all available over the course of the programme.

\*Students complete the Bronze Duke of Edinburgh award as part of their weekly timetable. This involves physical recreation, adventurous journey, skills and service modules. In addition, football, basketball, running and futsal clubs and Saturday sports activities run weekly for students to attend.

### **THE IB PROGRAMME**

The International Baccalaureate (IB) programme is a comprehensive and rigorous education programme for the final two years of secondary school. The overall objectives of the IB are to provide students with a broad and balanced education, to develop creative and compassionate life-time learners, and to promote international understanding.

In order to take the Diploma, students must take one subject from groups 1-6, and study three at Higher Level (HL) and three at Standard Level (SL).

Group 1: Studies in Language and Literature

Group 2: Language acquisition

Group 3: Individuals and Societies

Group 4: Sciences

Group 5: Mathematics

Group 6: The Arts

In addition, students are required to complete the 'core' - a course in Theory of Knowledge (TOK), to write an Extended Essay (EE) of 4000 words on one of their subjects, and to complete a minimum of 150 hours of activities in the areas of Creativity, Action and Service (CAS).

### A LEVEL COURSE

A wide variety of subjects can be studied in Mathematics, Sciences, Economics, Business, Humanities and Art as 6 (September start) term or 5 (January start) course. Students typically take 3 A-levels; students who take 4 A-levels are usually students taking Mathematics and Further Mathematics in order to make their university application to a mathematics-oriented course more competitive. Students can also elect to study the level 3 EPQ (Extended Project Qualification) alongside their three subjects. This qualification is particularly valuable in developing higher level study skills in preparation for undergraduate study. Students who are better suited, academically or in relation to English language abilities, to the University Foundation Programme, have the option to transfer across after the first year of A Level study (visa dependent).

### UNIVERSITY FOUNDATION PROGRAMME (UFP)

The University Foundation Programme, or UFP, is a one year programme designed for learners of other languages. It enables students to gain skills and knowledge to progress onto university. Student's study 3 subjects in the same range of A-level subjects in Maths, Sciences, Economics, Business, Humanities and Art. In addition to the A Level subjects students on UFP can also select from, International Relations, Geography and Applied Computer Studies.

## EXAMINATIONS

All UFP and PRE examinations are set and marked by the CATS Education UFP board; the University Foundation examinations are externally moderated.

## PROVISION FOR STUDENTS WITH ENGLISH AS A SECOND LANGUAGE

Students with English as a second language all follow an ESL (English as a Second Language) course at the college to support them in their studies. Students are expected to follow the relevant course until, as a minimum, they obtain a UKVI IELTS score of 6.5 + or equivalent in order to prepare them fully for the demand of undergraduate study. Once they have achieved the necessary UKVI IELTS score students are encouraged to continue to attend English for Academic Purposes classes focusing on academic skills related to higher level study. ESL staff also support in a number of subject classes across the college to assist students in their understanding of the complex demands of studying certain courses. CATS Canterbury deliver the Cambridge suite of qualifications and IELTS preparation classes which students are enrolled into based on their individual needs.

## BASELINE ASSESSMENTS FOR ALL STUDENTS

Upon arrival at CATS, all students undergo baseline testing, initially via ALIS (for A-level, UFP or IB students) or YELLIS (for PRE and iGCSE students). The data helps teachers (i) understand the progress students are making throughout their courses; (ii) identify whether students need more support and (iii) evaluate the impact of teaching on students' progress post-examinations.

## STUDENTS NEEDING ADDITIONAL LEARNING SUPPORT (ALS)

Students are monitored on their arrival at college and if identified as requiring assessment for ALS are referred for a LADS test (Computerised screening test for dyslexia), and those identified as needing further assessment are given the opportunity for a psychometric assessment with an Educational Psychologist.

Further testing and assessment then take place with recommendations to adapt teaching strategies for students with additional learning needs, fed back to all staff concerned, by means of an ALS register and log. Some students are given special 1:1 additional learning support sessions, depending on their specific needs.

ALS students are set regular targets each half term which are regularly reviewed. Full details are available in the ALS Policy document. For students on an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP), we will provide them with an education which follows the requirements of their plan and full details of our provision can be found in the ALS Policy.

## HIGH ATTAINING STUDENTS

CATS College Canterbury is committed to the provision of additional activities to stretch our most able students and provide them with suitable extra challenges. Our Key Professions programme, Scholars Programme and range of co and extra-curricular activities offer a range of additional academic options available to identified or self-selected students. For example:

- Model United Nations
- Academic competitions by department
- Language Leadership Award
- Duke of Edinburgh Award - Bronze and Silver
- Young Enterprise
- BSA Boarding Award
- Maths Challenge
- Science Olympiads
- Leadership Training Day
- Fast Track courses/ MOOCS
- IB Extended Essay options as standalone qualifications
- Theory of Knowledge sessions and presentations as a standalone qualification
- EPQ – Extended Project Qualification
- Key Professions Preparation for University entry into Law and Medicine (LNAT, BMAT, UKCAT)

Students are monitored via the college student data tracker to ensure they are engaged in one or more of these 'stretch' activities to provide additional challenge while in the UK. All students have the opportunity to apply to join these activities. The Higher Education Officer, the Assistant Principal Academic and Personal Tutors work with students to match additional activities to student needs and interests. Many of our stretch activities are based around challenges which allow students and staff to really focus an award on a particular student's interest or need. An option also exists to enter students for the EPQ with one-to-one counselling support which again allows for considerable flexibility in how high attaining students can be stretched in relevant and personalised ways.

## STUDENTS NOT MEETING TARGETS

Data is regularly analysed, and students identified as *underachieving* are enrolled into relevant support sessions depending on their unique challenges. For example, staff mentor students who are identified as in danger of failing their course and those students are provided with additional support and or resources to maximize their chance of success. IAPs (individual action plans) can be issued and monitored regularly, and other interventions such as report cards issued when necessary. SEN, language challenges and wellbeing concerns can also be highlighted, and relevant interventions agreed.

Curriculum plans and Schemes of Work at the college, coupled with a wide range of courses and options and processes to track students and report regularly all contribute to an environment in which we encourage all our students at all levels to achieve their best.

## CAREERS GUIDANCE

Appropriate careers guidance is provided, bearing in mind that almost all students come to us wishing to attend a UK or world university. Universities come into the college to provide individual one-to-one independent advice, as well as running sessions on Key Professions which our students are interested in, including Engineering, Law, Medicine and a range of other areas. Cross college competitions and events are held annually in different sectors, e.g. Economics 'Fiscal Challenge'. These activities are designed to support students in their preparation for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of adult life. A full range of leadership programmes and positions of responsibility are also offered as we encourage students to become change agents for the future. We use the Unifrog platform to provide additional opportunities for students to research various career options.

Our Careers Guidance is laid out in the college Information Advice and Guidance Policy. A range of activities and visits are put on over the year for students allowing impartial and independent careers advice, including a University Fair, as well as ongoing advice from our Higher Education Team. Careers education also forms part of the Personal Development Programme for all students. This would include advice and sessions for students progressing from GCSE and PRE-Programme courses onto the various options of IB, A level or UFP and ultimately about their next step after they have completed their studies with us.

## PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT AND SMSC (Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development)

All students have discrete PSHE/RSE lessons in addition to covering some elements of PSHE in their English (ESL) and subject courses. There is a whole-college programme of PSHE/RSE which covers a wide range of topics related to living in the wider world, relationships and health and wellbeing, as well as a range of other contemporary topics. Personal Tutor lessons, delivered by a dedicated personal tutor cover a range of social and cultural themes to encourage discussion, tolerance, harmony, knowledge of citizenship and further reflection, to prepare students for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of adult or university life. Please refer to the Pastoral Policy for more information.

## REQUEST BY A STUDENT TO MOVE FROM ONE COURSE TO ANOTHER

Sometimes, a parent/agent will request a transfer of their student from one course to another. This can be affected, provided there are grounds for the request, if it is possible within the constraints of the timetable, and all those concerned are in agreement with the proposed change. Changes after the first four weeks of the commencement of the course are usually discouraged unless in exceptional circumstances.

## COMPULSORY SCHOOL AGE (CSA) STUDENTS

A person ceases to be of "compulsory school age" on the last Friday of June during the year that s/he becomes 16 provided that the child's birthday is before the beginning of the next school year. CSA students may be studying on the GCSE or PRE Programme. In certain circumstances CSA students who are ready for additional challenge, may be allowed to progress to the IB or A-level in Canterbury.

All students of UK compulsory school age follow a full-time supervised programme in accordance with Section 8 of the Education Act 1996 which gives students experience in linguistic, mathematical, scientific, technological, human and social, physical and aesthetic and creative education which supports their personal, social, emotional and physical development and their communication and language skills. Fast track opportunities are available for high attaining students to move directly onto the IB or A-level programmes where their ability and previous educational experience outside the UK would warrant it.

For students above CSA age, a programme is provided which is appropriate to their needs.

## PROGRESSION POLICIES

A student who does not attain an authorised attendance level of 95% or actual attendance of 80% (at the discretion of the Principal) may not be guaranteed entry to the next public examination session and may be removed from their course.

All students are counselled at the end of year 1 GCSE, IB and A-level courses before progressing onto year 2 or changing to a more suitable programme of study. A Level students who do not attain C grades or better during their end of year 1 examinations or a minimum of 22 IB points, will be

advised as to the other opportunities they can consider for year 13 study. Parents/agents are always involved in these discussions and agreed progression is by mutual consent.

## Monitoring and Evaluation

Arrangements for monitoring and evaluation of the policy: the evidence that will demonstrate the success of this policy include:

- Assessment and Examination results.
- Feedback from students in surveys and evaluation forms or directly to members of staff.
- Schemes of Work.
- Records of work done. Work scrutiny and folder inspections by Assistant Principal Academic, Curriculum Directors and/or Pastoral Directors.

## Policy Links

- Assessment & Reporting
- Teaching and Learning
- ALS Policy
- Safeguarding
- PSHE Policy
- Risk Assessments on Safeguarding and Terrorism
- Informal Advice and Guidance Policy

*Date for review: the college will review this policy annually and evaluate its effectiveness. This policy takes account of any guidance issued by the Secretary of State*