

The Academic Enrichment Programme

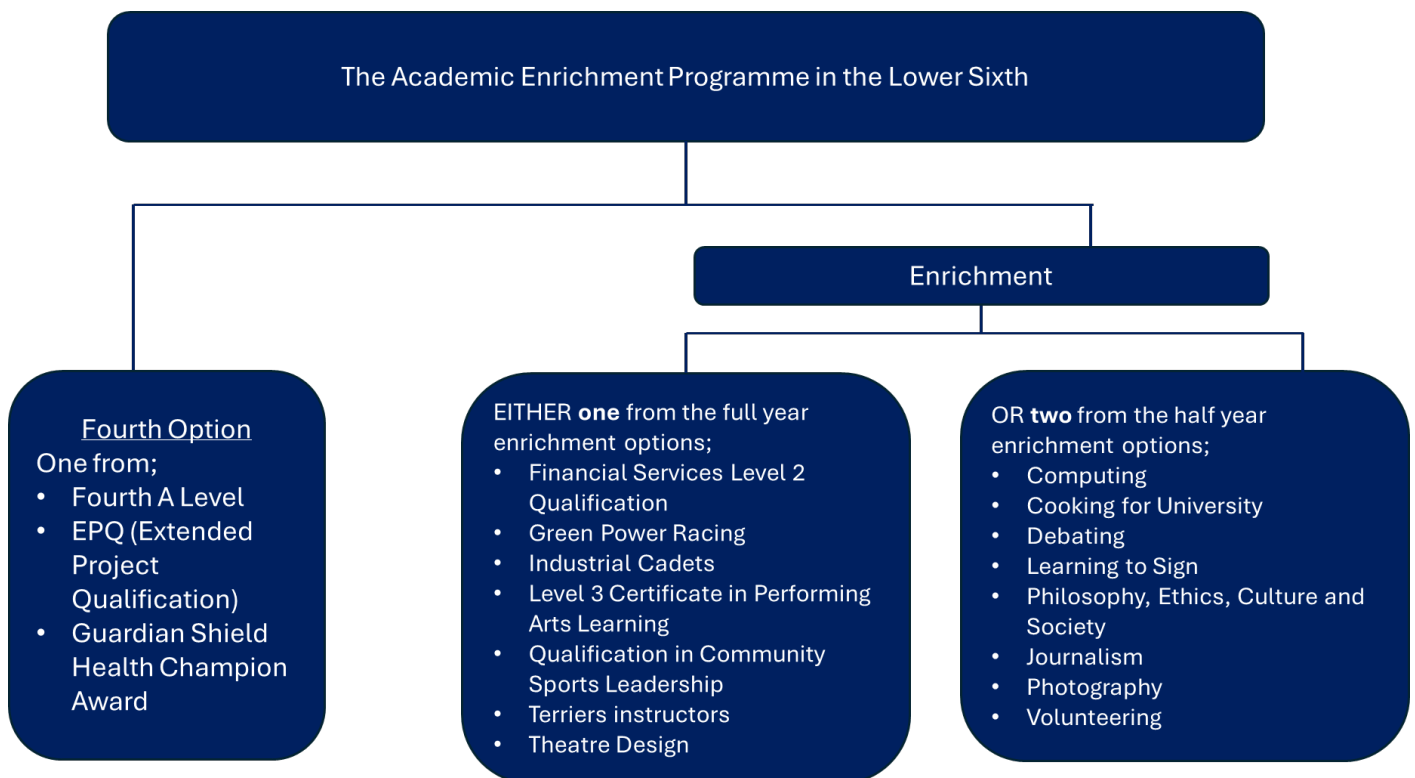
Certificated Courses and Enrichment in the Lower Sixth

In a world where so much emphasis is put on exam success, we have designed the Academic Enrichment Programme to enable the development of the whole student. Our guiding principle is to provide you with opportunities to learn that go beyond the curriculum, to gain experiences outside your day-to-day life in the classroom and to develop skills that will set you up for your future.

With the application process for university and for jobs becoming even more competitive, we also believe that the Academic Enrichment Programme will help you to stand out from other applicants by being able to demonstrate learning beyond the curriculum and a wide range of critical thinking and problem-solving.

The programme is here to provide you with something different and to enable you to have fun whilst learning and developing your skills. Through this programme, we want to support you to meet your aspirations.

The Academic Enrichment Programme is made up of two parts: the Fourth Option in the Lower Sixth and the Enrichment Programme which runs through both the Lower and Upper Sixth. Details of the options available in these two programmes are given here.



Fourth Option

Students are able to choose from one of three programmes of study. These have been designed to cover a range of interests and result in certificates which can then be included on UCAS applications and CVs. We encourage students to consider completing the Extended Project Qualification. Alternatively, students can choose to take on a fourth A Level or participate in our bespoke Guardian Shield Health Champion course.

Fourth A Level

This option is available to those students who seek the challenge of a fourth taught course. It is important to note that Further Mathematics is only offered as a fourth A Level although all other subjects can be added as a fourth option if academically appropriate. The school would expect those doing four A Levels to be predicted at least six Grade 8s at GCSE and an 8 in each of their proposed A Level subjects. Due to the implications of this choice, students **MUST** consult with Mrs Chillcott, Director of Post-School Pathways & Academic Guidance, who oversees the options process. Due to timetable constraints, students who take a fourth A Level cannot also opt for another fourth option course.

Extended Project Qualification (EPQ)

Most students in the Lower Sixth complete an EPQ. It forms two sessions on a student's weekly timetable and requires them to undertake a research project on a topic of their choosing. The outcome is either a 5,000 dissertation or an artefact (something made by the student – a piece of artwork, music or podcast to give a just three examples). Alongside this final piece, the student will submit evidence of their research and organisation of the project.

Students are free to choose a research topic that is of personal interest to them. Each year the range of topics is diverse. Previous projects include a series of podcasts about the importance of radio, a children's book about autism and dissertations about the prison system, climate change, mental health, cryptocurrency and car design.

One of the most important aspects of the EPQ is that it embeds skills that will help the student in their transition to university helping them work independently and think critically. One session a week is a taught skills session that focus on topics such as referencing, time management and organisation. The other session each week is spent with a supervisor who will discuss the student's individual project with them and guide them through the process. It is also worth up to 28 UCAS points and, as the qualification is so well regarded by universities, a high grade in the EPQ can lead to a student receiving a reduced offer from their chosen university.

The hard work culminates in a wonderful presentation event in March where students display their findings to invited guests, including friends and family. By this point, they have become experts in their chosen topic and demonstrate real pride in their work.

Solihull Guardian Shield Health Champion

This modular course not only provides a comprehensive introduction to crucial skills which could one day make a vital difference to other people's lives. All the modules are certified by external organisations and equip you with adult qualifications that help to build your CV and support plans for jobs either during 6th Form or beyond. The first module is where you are trained to be a Mental Health UK First Aider (MHFA UK) which includes how to understand, identify and support someone in a mental health crisis with a deeper dive into mental health issues. This is followed by physical first aid skills (First Response First Aid) including managing emergency situations in both adult and paediatric care, resuscitation techniques, dealing with a variety of common injuries and urgent illnesses and use of AED defibrillator machines. You will then train to become a Dementia Friend with training from an external specialist organisation, followed by skills and support for neurodiversity in the community. Finally, you will gain a qualification in understanding modern day slavery, how to spot the increasingly common signs and what to do.

Apart from 2 slightly extended double periods for elements of the physical first aid training, your work will be done in lessons with very little prep, and it will finish at the same time as the end of the EPQs. The Guardian Shield training also forms part of your UCAS reference for post-18 pathway plans.

Enrichment

The Enrichment Programme for the Lower Sixth is designed to take you out of the classroom and to give you the chance to learn, develop and apply skills in new settings. This is your opportunity to challenge yourself and try something new. It does not need to be selected to support your A Level choices, though you may wish to consider future aspirations for university or beyond.

You will take part in this activity for two periods a week. Some of the Enrichment options take place over the course of the entire academic year (September – June), whereas others are offered for half the year. These options will run September – December, and then January – June. Please note carefully how long each Enrichment option runs for when making your choices.

Current activities include:

Lower Sixth Enrichment – Full year Options

Financial Services Level 2 Qualification – This course is the first step in developing the essential basic knowledge required for working in the financial services. You will learn about the professional sector and commonly used financial products, such as shares, bonds and insurance and it will provide you with an understanding of financial terminology. It is ideal for those students considering a career in finance. *Please note that is an enrolment and examination fee for this course of approximately £70.*

Green Power Racing – This option involves practical engineering and competitive events designed to give you hands-on experience in designing, building, and racing electric vehicles. You will work as a team to develop a custom chassis, incorporating a standard motor and battery - ultimately pitting your vehicle against other schools and universities at an official racetrack. This option is ideal for anyone considering a career in the motor industry, as an engineer, or who enjoys fabrication and has an interest in motorsport.

Industrial Cadets (Engineering Education Scheme) – Take part in a national scheme which provides an opportunity for 16/17 year old students who are considering a career in engineering. You will work in a team with applied science and technology companies to solve real life problems.

Level 3 Certificate in Supporting Music and Performing Arts Learning - Gain a Level 3 Certificate and UCAS points. The qualification is suitable for students who have experience in Performing Arts subjects: Drama, Musical Theatre or Dance, choosing the strand that you would like to specialise in. You will study; safe teaching, planning learning and facilitating learning, equipping you with the knowledge and skills to progress to higher education and, if you desire, to specialise in teaching. *Please note that a fee in the region of £45 applies to this option.*

Qualification for Community Sports Leadership (QCSL) – A practical course in which you will learn how to deliver safe sporting and recreational activities. The course results in a Level 2 certificate. *Please note that a fee in the region of £40 applies to this option.*

Terriers Instructors – Develop your leadership and communication skills and help shape young minds by volunteering to train as an instructor on our bespoke Outdoor Education Programme for the Third Form (Year 7). Take responsibility for activities such as cycle maintenance, orienteering, first aid, navigation and water safety. This includes lots of outside activities. For those new to the school it is a great way to interact with our younger pupils and is fun!

Theatre Design – A perfect course for those students who want to get involved in all aspects of performance design, including costume design, managing props and set design. This course provides an opportunity to take design projects from desk to stage and much more beyond.

Lower Sixth Enrichment – Half year Options

Current activities include:

Cooking for university – Learn to plan, prepare and cook a range of quick, easy tasty and nutritious meals on a limited budget; also covers the basics of food hygiene and food allergens. *Please note- GCSE FPN students may have already covered the dishes and skills in this course.*

Computing – This course is for anyone who would like to develop their computing skills whether it be in programming or in more common applications. The course is suitable for all, whether you stopped studying computing in Shells or have taken a GCSE in ICT or Computer Science. We will look at your specific interests and future plans and generate a personalised plan for you to follow. We can offer: Advanced Object-Oriented programming; Introduction to HTML 5; Microsoft Office; AI in a range of disciplines; and a variety of other courses. *Please note some of these courses will incur a fee.*

Debating – Discuss some of the most challenging and provocative issues of the day. This course allows you to develop the skills of analysis, learn how to structure an argument, spot flaws and speak with confidence.

Journalism – Hone your skills as a writer! Take part in this option to develop your writing across a range of styles, including poetry, articles, film scripts and short stories, and get your work published in school publications. Ideal for the potential journalist, novelist or someone who just wants to write for fun!

Learning to Sign – Learn the art and subtlety of expressing yourself without speaking! This exciting course provides you with the opportunity to learn British Sign Language. *Please note that a nominal fee applies to this option.*

Philosophy, Ethics, Culture and Society – Using a wide range of resources, this is your chance to explore big ideas about the world around you, ranging from ethical theory to extremism and post-modernism.

Photography - Explore a variety of techniques and approaches to photography. Shoot out on location and in the studio, and experiment with digital and dark room processes to create interesting and creative results. Respond to the imagery of contemporary photographers to have fun with composition, lighting, and manipulation techniques.

Volunteering – Community service is a core part of the ethos at Solihull School and this option involves going out into the Solihull community to volunteer at a variety of venues, including local infant and junior schools, supporting reading and extra-curricular activities at Solihull Prep School, volunteering at Ardenlea Care Home, and others. This is an ideal option for anyone thinking of entering medicine, nursing, teaching, or any other caring professions, as well as being an opportunity to go out and help our local community.

Please note that the fourth option and enrichment options listed here are subject to change and may not be available in a given year depending on student uptake. Students will be asked whether they are interested in any of the one year courses, and to indicate their first and second choice of these if relevant. Students will also be asked to indicate their first, second, third and fourth choice options of the half year courses available.

These sessions will be interspersed with **lectures** and **workshops**. Lectures take place approximately once every half term. Previous speakers have included a world poetry slam champion, an Olympic athlete, an explorer who has scaled Everest and a neuroscientist.