



# Key Stage 5 course options

Saint Helena Secondary School

# 2026-27

# Welcome

This booklet gives a summary of the courses we have available for Year 12 and 13 students in September 2026. Those considering the Academic Route or Blended Route should consider these options and discuss the course with the relevant teacher. **The staff member to speak to is listed in the course description.**

In the booklet, each subject is accompanied by the exam board and syllabus code, like this example:

## Art

AQA (7201/X & 7201/C). Taught course, 5 hours contact time per week.

*A level Art is provided by the **AQA** exam board, with the syllabus codes **7201/X** and **7201/C**. Searching for this information online will take you to the correct course website where you can find more information about the subject and what it involves.*

A full A level normally takes two years of study. Most subjects offer an “AS” component, which is examined after the first year of study. The AS component may or may not contribute towards the final A level grade, depending on the examination board used. Some subjects at A level are linear. This means there is no AS component and the final grade is based on one set of exams/ coursework at the end of the two-year course. Others are modular where the student works towards the qualification through a series of examinations periods, including the opportunity to re-sit if needed. The subject teacher will be able to advise on this.

Another factor to consider is the mixture of **taught** vs. **distance learning** options you want to take. Studying a subject without the guidance of a teacher full-time is a serious commitment, and you should keep that in mind when making your choices.

Dr Thomas North  
Head of Key Stage 5

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# AS & A Levels

## Art - A-Level

AQA (7201/C & 7201/X). Taught course, 5 hours contact time per week. Speak to: Mrs Sharon Duncan and Mrs Adele Plato.

This course allows students to develop their creative skills, independence, and critical understanding through practical work and portfolio building, preparing them for further study or creative careers.

### Content

Develop a personal, practical, and critical understanding of art and design through sustained studio practice and research.

- **Component 1: Personal Investigation (60%)**

A major project where you choose a theme or idea that interests you, create and develop your own artwork, research artists and designers for inspiration, and write about your ideas (1,000-3,000 words), processes, and how your work has progressed.

- **Component 2: Externally Set Assignment (40%)**

AQA provides starting points in February. Students develop ideas over a preparatory period and complete a timed final outcome (usually 15 hours).

Across both components, students:

- Explore and experiment with materials, techniques, and processes
- Record ideas through drawing, photography, annotation, and studies
- Analyse and respond to artists, designers, and cultures
- Develop and refine ideas to produce resolved personal outcomes

**Useful for** careers in Fine Arts, Graphic Design, Illustration, Art Education, Art Therapy, Art Restoration, Curatorial Work, Photography, Advertising, and Fashion Design.

### Subject-specific grade requirements

GCSE Art grade C/5.

IGCSE English grade B

# Biology

Pearson Edexcel, International Advanced Level (XBI11/YBI11). Taught course, 5 hours contact time per week. Speak to: Ms Rebecca Lawrence.

This course provides a comprehensive understanding of biological principles, exploring topics such as genetics, health and physiology, ecology, modern scientific principles, fostering scientific thinking and laboratory skills. This course is modular, therefore students can sit examinations in two sittings in Year 12 and two or three in Year 13. Individual modules can be retaken before the final qualification is awarded. The AS part of the course consists of 3 papers and the A2 part a further 3 papers. Students not wishing to complete the full A level may 'cash in' their AS modules at the end of Year 12 and gain a standalone AS qualification.

## Year 1 (AS) content

Unit 1: Molecules, Diet, Transport and Health

Unit 2: Cells, Development, Biodiversity and Conservation

Unit 3: Practical Skills in Biology I

## Year 2 content

Unit 4: Energy, Environment, Microbiology and Immunity

Unit 5: Respiration, Internal Environment, Coordination and Gene Technology

Unit 6: Practical Skills in Biology II

## Practical skills

Practical skills are taught throughout the A-level. These skills are assessed in two written papers (Units 3 and 6) and contribute to the final A level grade.

**Useful for** careers in Medicine, Veterinary Science, Biotechnology, Pharmacology, Environmental Science, Genetics, Microbiology. A levels in Science are well-regarded for any subject area when moving on to higher education.

## Grade requirements

IGCSE Co-ordinated Sciences (Double Award): 6,6

GCSE English Language: 5

# Chemistry

Pearson Edexcel, International Advanced Level (XCH11,YCH11). Taught course, 5 hours contact time per week. Speak to: Chemistry teacher.

The International Advanced Subsidiary and Advanced Level Chemistry has been developed to be engaging for international learners and to give them the necessary skills to support progression to higher education or further study in chemistry, as well as to a wide range of other subjects. The AS part of the course consists of 3 papers and the A2 part a further 3 papers. Students not wishing to complete the full A level may 'cash in' their AS modules at the end of Year 12 and gain a standalone AS qualification.

## Year 1 (AS) content

Unit 1: Structure, Bonding and Introduction to Organic Chemistry

Unit 2: Energetics, Group Chemistry, Halogenoalkanes and Alcohols

Unit 3: Practical Skills in Chemistry I

## Year 2 content

Unit 4: Rates, Equilibria and Further Organic Chemistry

Unit 5: Transition Metals and Organic Nitrogen Chemistry

Unit 6: Practical Skills in Chemistry II

## Practical skills

Practical skills are taught throughout the A-level. These skills are assessed in two written papers (Units 3 and 6) and contribute to the final A level grade.

**Useful for** careers in Chemical engineering, Biochemistry, Biological sciences, Medicine, Dentistry Veterinary Science, Pharmacology, Materials Science, Environmental Science. A levels in Science are well-regarded for any subject area when moving on to higher education.

## Grade requirements

IGCSE Co-ordinated Sciences (Double Award): 6/6, with strong performance in chemistry in the mock exams.

# Design & Technology

CAIE (9705). Taught course, 5 hours contact time per week. Speak to: Mr Nicholas Plato.

This course explores the design and development of innovative products, emphasizing problem-solving, creativity, and practical skills in areas such as product design, systems and control, and materials technology. Product Design will be a chosen focus.

## AS content

Students will develop a strong understanding of design principles, product analysis, materials, and manufacturing processes, applying their knowledge to design and create functional prototypes while considering user needs and sustainability. Ending in a 2, 15mins hour exam, 1st coursework and a project model/prototype.

## A2 content

Building upon the AS level, students will further refine their design skills, exploring advanced techniques in product development, ergonomics, CAD/CAM, Google Sketchup and systems and control, culminating in the creation of a final major project that showcases their creativity and technical expertise. Ending in a final 2 half hour exam, 2nd coursework and a final project

**Useful for** careers in Industrial Design, Product Development, Engineering, Architecture, Manufacturing, Sustainable Design, Furniture Design, Automotive Design, Interior Design, and Design Consultancy.

## Subject-specific grade requirements

IGCSE Design & Technology at grade 6/7 or above.

# AS & A level English Language

**Exam board:** AQA 7701 (AS) 7702 (ALevel). This course can be taught or distance learning. The number of contact hours depends on staff availability. Subject Lead: Mrs Mercia George.

This linear course offers clear skills progression from GCSE, it enables students to build on the skills already gained and prepare for their next steps. It will be useful to any student wishing to extend their learning into Level 4 and higher, giving students the ability to critically analyse, and use, the work of others whilst writing at a higher, academic/professional level.

The variety of assessment styles used, such as data analysis, discursive essays, directed writing, original writing and research-based investigative writing - allowing students to develop a wide range of skills. These include critical reading, data analysis, evaluation, the ability to develop and sustain arguments and a number of different writing skills which are invaluable for both further study and future employment.

## Subject Content (Page numbers provided reference the Specification)

### AS

#### Subject content

3.1.1 [Textual variations and representations](#) (page 13)

3.2.1 [Language diversity](#) (page 15)

3.2.3 [Writing skills](#) (page 15)

Methods of language analysis underpin each component:

Component 1 – 3.1.2 [Methods of language analysis](#) (page 14)

Component 2 – 3.2.2 [Methods of language analysis](#) (page 15)

### A-level

#### Subject content

4.1.1 [Textual variations and representations](#) (page 18)

4.1.3 [Children's language development](#) (page 19)

4.2.1 [Language diversity and change](#) (page 19)

4.2.3 [Language discourses](#) (page 20)

4.2.4 [Writing skills](#) (page 20)

4.3.1 [Language Investigation](#) (page 21)

4.3.2 [Original writing](#) (page 23)

Methods of language analysis underpin each component:

Component 1 – 4.1.2 [Methods of language analysis](#) (page 18)

Component 2 – 4.2.2 [Methods of language analysis](#) (page 20)

Component 3 – 4.3.3 [Methods of language analysis](#) (page 23)

## Non-Exam Assessment (NEA- Coursework)

Non-exam assessment: Language in Action
<b>What's assessed</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Language Investigation</li><li>• Original Writing</li><li>• Methods of language analysis are integrated into the activities</li></ul>
<b>Assessed</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Word count: 3,500</li><li>• 100 marks</li><li>• 20% of A-level</li><li>• Assessed by teachers</li><li>• Moderated by AQA</li></ul>
<b>Tasks</b> <p>Students produce:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• a language investigation (2,000 words excluding data)</li><li>• a piece of original writing and commentary (1,500 words total)</li></ul>

**Useful for careers in:** Publishing, Journalism, Creative Writing, Teaching, Advertising and Marketing, Media and Communication, Public Relations, Linguistics, Cultural Analysis, and any field that requires strong analytical and communication skills.

### Subject-specific grade requirements

IGCSE English Language at grade 6 (B) or above. Where students achieve a good pass at Grade 5 students can discuss and negotiate with the subject lead.

*(Tables used above are directly quoted/copied from the AQA AS and A-Level English Language Specification, Version 1.2, 14 October 2021)*

# Geography

CAIE (9696). Distance learning. Speak to: Ms Rebecca Lawrence.

This course explores the dynamic relationship between humans and their environment, studying topics such as physical landscapes, human populations, urbanization, global issues, and sustainable development, fostering critical thinking, research skills, and spatial awareness.

## AS content

Students will examine physical processes, including landforms, weather, and ecosystems, as well as human geography topics like population dynamics, urban environments, and development issues, developing an understanding of key geographical concepts and fieldwork skills.

## A2 content

Building upon the AS level, students will delve deeper into topics such as global interdependence, environmental management, and geographical research methods, conducting independent investigations and analyzing spatial patterns and processes.

**Useful for** careers in Environmental Planning, Urban Planning, Geographic Information Systems (GIS), International Development, Tourism and Hospitality, Market Research, Sustainability Consulting, Environmental Policy, Geographic Education, and Research Analysis.

## Subject-specific grade requirements

IGCSE Geography at grade B or above.

GCSE English Language at grade 6 is recommended.

# Information Technology

CAIE (9626). Taught course (depending on staffing). Speak to: Miss Ellen Piek or Mr Newton Odunsi.

This course explores the effective use of a range of software packages, further develops students' understanding of computer and communication systems and the basis of how humans and computers interact to produce required outcomes. The course has both theoretical and practical elements of which both are examined.

## AS content

Students will examine theory topics including, data processing and information, hardware and software, monitoring and control of computer systems, algorithms and flowcharts, eSecurity, the digital divide and Expert systems.

In addition they will also study and engage in the following practical aspects of information technology including, spreadsheets, computer modelling, database and file concepts, and video and audio editing.

## A2 content

Building upon the AS level, students will delve deeper into topics covered previously as well as studying the additional theory topics, IT in society, new and emerging computer technologies, communications technology, project management, system life cycle and data analysis and visualisation.

In addition they will also study the following practical aspects of information technology including, mail merge, graphics creation, animation, programming for the web.

**Useful for** careers in any IT or computing based careers such as web development, database management, networking in addition to being useful for most if not all careers that involve the use of IT.

## Subject-specific grade requirements

IGCSE Information and Communication Technology(ICT) at grade 6 or above.

# Mathematics

The standard Pearson Edexcel International A Level (IAL) Mathematics qualification requires students to complete six units: four Pure Mathematics units (P1, P2, P3, P4) and two Applied Mathematics units chosen from Statistics 1 (S1), Mechanics 1 (M1), and Decision 1 (D1). Taught course, 5-6 hours contact time per week. Speak to: Mr Michael Pattison.

This course provides a comprehensive understanding of mathematical principles and problem-solving techniques, covering topics such as algebra, calculus, statistics, mechanics, and decision mathematics, fostering logical reasoning, analytical skills, and mathematical modelling.

## AS content

Pure Mathematics (P1), Pure Mathematics 2 (P2), and one choice from Statistics 1 (S1), Mechanics 1 (M1), or Decision 1 (D1). This stage provides the fundamental principles of calculus, algebraic manipulation, and an introduction to one area of practical application: data analysis (S1), physical modelling (M1), or optimisation/algorithmic problem-solving (D1).

## A2 content

Pure Mathematics 3 (P3), Pure Mathematics 4 (P4), and the second option unit chosen from S1, M1, or D1. This stage involves deep application of calculus, vectors, and complex problem-solving in areas like differential equations and advanced modelling based on the chosen applied units.

**Career Usefulness:** This qualification is essential for almost all Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) degrees. The inclusion of options like D1 makes it particularly useful for students aiming for degrees in Computer Science, Software Engineering, Economics, Actuarial Science, Physics, and all branches of Engineering.

## Subject-specific grade requirements

GCSE Mathematics at grade 7 or above.

# Psychology

AQA (7182). Distance learning course, 2 hours of video sessions per week. Speak to: Ms Rebecca Lawrence

This course explores the scientific study of human behavior and mental processes, covering topics such as cognitive psychology, social psychology, biological psychology, and psychological research methods, fostering critical thinking, analytical skills, and an understanding of human nature.

## Year 1 (AS) content

Students will study topics including memory, social influence, attachment, psychopathology, and research methods, gaining foundational knowledge of key psychological theories and research techniques.

## Year 2 content

Building upon the AS level, students will delve deeper into topics such as cognitive psychology, biological psychology, issues and debates in psychology, and individual differences, applying psychological theories to real-life scenarios and conducting independent research.

**Useful for** careers in Clinical Psychology, Counseling, Human Resources, Education, Market Research, Neuropsychology, Forensic Psychology, Occupational Therapy, Sports Psychology, Advertising, and Mental Health Support.

## Subject-specific grade requirements

Coordinated Science 6,6/ Applied Science B or Psychology B/6. As this is a distance learning option, a grade 6 in GCSE English Language is recommended.

# Physics

Pearson Edexcel, International Advanced Level (XPh11/YPh11). . Taught course, 5 hours contact time per week. Speak to: Dr Thomas North.

This course explores the fundamental principles of physics, covering topics such as mechanics, waves, electricity, magnetism, quantum physics, particle and nuclear physics and astrophysics, fostering analytical thinking, problem-solving skills, and a deep understanding of the natural world.

## Year 1 (AS) content

Students will study topics including measurements and their errors, mechanics, electricity, waves, and quantum physics developing a strong foundation in physics principles and experimental techniques.

## Year 2 (A2) content

Building upon the AS level, students will delve deeper into topics such as further mechanics, electric and magnetic fields, thermodynamics, particle and nuclear physics, and astrophysics, applying advanced theories and mathematical models to solve complex problems and explore the frontiers of physics.

## Practical endorsement

As a part of the course, there will be 16 total required practicals. This does not contribute to the A level grade, but does lead into exam questions on experimental techniques, tested in primarily Unit 3 and Unit 6

**Useful for** careers in Engineering, Astrophysics, Research Science, Aerospace, Renewable Energy, Medical Physics, Data Science, Nanotechnology, Robotics, Teaching, and Science Communication.

## Subject-specific grade requirements

IGCSE Co-ordinated Sciences (Double Award) minimum: BB,

GCSE Maths: 6.

*It is highly recommended a student either; is studying A level Maths alongside Physics, **or** have achieved a grade 8+ at GCSE in Maths*

# Sociology

AQA (7192). Distance learning course, 2 hours of video sessions per week. Speak to: Ms Rebecca Lawrence

This qualification offers an engaging and effective introduction to Sociology. Students will learn the fundamentals of the subject and develop skills valued by higher education (HE) and employers, including critical analysis, independent thinking and research.

## Year 1 (AS)

- Education with Methods in Context
- Research Methods and Topics in Sociology

There are two written exams for the AS qualification

## Year 2

- Education with Theory and Methods
- Topics in Sociology
- Crime and Deviance with Theory and Methods

There are three written exams for the A level qualification

**Useful for** careers in Counselling, Social Work, Teaching, Politics, Journalism, History, Anthropology, Policing, Human Rights.

## Subject-specific grade requirements

There are no additional grade requirements for this course. As this is a distance learning option, a grade 6 in GCSE English Language is recommended.

# Level 3 Distance Learning

Level 3 (non-A level) courses are studied within one academic year. There are no exams, but progress is checked through completion of tutor-marked assessments which are submitted and marked by off-island tutors. Online access to self-study materials are provided. Students opting for these qualifications need to be confident in their ability to manage their own time and motivate themselves without the assistance of a teacher.

Level 3 courses are offered to complete a programme of study, not as a primary course choice.

These will only be considered for students who:

- 1) have a clear idea of their career aspirations or area of interest
- 2) have selected at least two relevant A levels from those offered by the school

Example:

A student interested in working in the healthcare industry may opt for the following course combination: A level Biology, A level Chemistry and an NCFE CACHE Level 3 Certificate in Advanced Health and Social Care.

**Please note, most of these courses do not carry UCAS points or formal accreditation, therefore will not count towards a university application. You are advised to first consider three AS level subjects as these are more likely to be useful to you as qualifications. The school reserves the right to decline to fund a Level 3 course if it is deemed unsuitable or there are budgetary constraints.**

# Level 3 Certificate in Maritime Studies

Distance learning, facilitated by the Marine Society. Self-study with live online tutorials. Speak to: Ms Rebecca Lawrence. **Availability of this course depends on the funding available.**

24 UCAS points. Endorsed by the Institute of Chartered Ship Brokers.

**Who is this course for?** Anyone aged 16 or above with an interest in the maritime sector. No prior knowledge of maritime is needed. The course is aimed at school or college leavers as well as unemployed adults or those wishing to retrain.

**How will I learn?** This is a distance-learning course with online tutor support. Each month, lecturers and guest speakers present webinars on a specific unit. All learning resources will be provided, including the Marine Society Learn@Sea programmes, online material, and supporting text book. You will need to complete a portfolio of activities and written assignments to pass the course. There are no exams. The full course comprises five units including two mandatory units. Learners can choose to enrol for single unit certification.

## What will I learn?

- Working in the Maritime Sector\* Maritime jobs; types of ship and cargo; ship and port safety; flagging classification and insurance; and future trends in maritime.
- Vessel Types and Design Types of ship; terminology; ship building; propulsion types; ship inspection and survey; lifecycle of a ship from construction to demolition.
- Maritime Trade Global geography of maritime trade; shipping routes; routing of ships including tramp and liner services; how ships and cargoes are brought together by brokers.
- Port Services and Operation Types of port; what makes a port operate efficiently; port agency, port workers; vessel planning, operation and logistics; safe working practices; technological transformation of port.
- Commercial Shipping Operations Tramp and liner shipping; how ships are hired to carry cargo; the role of brokers in chartering; types of charter party; calculation of voyage and port costs; e-commerce and bills of lading.

