

Curriculum Policy

Primary person responsible for updates to this policy: Assistant Principal (Academic)

Last review date: August 2026

Next review date: June 2027

Circulation: This policy has been adopted by the governors and is available to parents on request. It is addressed to all members of staff and volunteers and applies wherever they are working with children.

‘Parents’ refers to parents, guardians and carers.

As well as accepting UK students, Abbey College Manchester has a Tier 4 Sponsor licence with UK Visas and Immigration (UKVI) and is able to accept international students. A range of courses is available to international students and the most suitable one will be dependent on the student's age, English language skills and educational history and experience.

Entry requirements for courses are based on previous examination performance and number of years of school completed in most cases (alongside the English level for second language speakers)

The year group entry points available are as follows:

- 1) Year 11: The programme offered is based on previous academic performance or previous GCSE performance. Re-take students will need a minimum of D or 3 to be considered for the course. Students without prior grades will be required to take an English and Maths diagnostic assessment as part of the interview process.
- 2) Year 12: Programmes comprising three linear A-levels are suitable for students who meet the criteria laid out in the Figure 2. Alternative level 3 programmes (i.e. International Foundation Programme and Combined Studies Programme) are available for students who do not meet the criteria to study A-level and can be discussed during the interview.
- 3) A Success in the Sixth Form Programme is part of all Year 12 courses. This aims to strengthen study skills and build the 5Rs (Routine, Rigour, Responsibility, Resilience and Reflection).
- 4) Year 13: Year 12 grades of D or above are required for students to progress into the Upper Sixth to study A-level. Students with weaker Year 12 grades will be advised about alternative level 3 courses from Figure 1.
- 5) Upper Sixth transfer students: Year 12 grades of B or above are required for students to transfer into the Upper Sixth. Possibilities are discussed at interview.
- 6) Re-take A -level courses: This programme is suitable for students who have taken their A levels before but wish to re-take to improve their grades to get onto their chosen degree course. The most suitable programme will be discussed at interview. The change to the linear A-level system complicated taking new subjects from scratch although some subjects are possible and can be discussed at interview. *From scratch subjects attract an additional fee as more lessons are required.*
- 7) Mid-year transfers: Abbey College may accept a student mid-year or mid-course if there are places available. Students are advised to contact the college to discuss possibilities.
- 8) Students with Special Educational Needs: Students with some learning difficulties will benefit from the learning environment at Abbey College. Students with specific learning difficulties should read the notes in the Admission Policy.
- 9) Special arrangements in examinations: The Learning Support Department ensure that Access Arrangements (e.g. extra time, laptop or amanuensis) are available for each student as long as the need has been declared at interview or has been identified by the Learning Support Department after the student has enrolled at the college.

Entry requirements for Year 12 A-level programme

Subject	GCSE/IGCSE
Maths	A or 7+
Further Maths	A* or 8/9 in Maths
Biology	B or 6+
Chemistry	B or 6+
Physics	B or 6+
Psychology	B or 6+ in Maths
Business	B or 6+ in English
Economics	B or 6+ in English
Environmental Science	B or 6+ in English
Religious Studies	B or 6+
Art	B or 6+
Photography	B or 6+ in related subject

Notes by country for Year 12 A-level entry

China	Completion of middle school and 80% minimum in subjects to be studied (out of 100)
Vietnam	Completion of Grade 10, the first year of Upper Secondary School and results of 5.0 – 10 (out of 10)
Malaysia	Completion of Sijil Pelajaran Malaysia (SPM/Certificate of Education) at Grades 1 - 6
Angola	Completion of Secondary School Certificate and results of 10 – 20 (out of 20)
Nigeria	Completion of WAEC and results of A1 - C6 in subjects
Russia	Completion of Attestat (if taken at in Grade 11) and results of 3, 4 or 5 (out of 5)
Kazakhstan	Completion of Attestat (if taken at in Grade 11) and results of 3, 4 or 5 (out of 5)
Germany	Completion of Realschulabschluss; Mittlerer Schulabschluss (Lower Secondary Education) at Grades of 1 - 4
Iran	Completion of Grade 10 Diplom-Motavaseth examination with grades of higher than 13 (out of 20)
India	Completion of Grade 10 Matriculation or Secondary examination with good grades
Pakistan	Completion of Secondary School Certificate at the end of Grade 10 with good grades
United Arab Emirates	Completion of middle school (Grade 9) and good grades achieved
Albania	Certificate of Maturity (Secondary School Leaving Certificate) at Grades 5 – 10 (out of 10). Students completing Year 10 can apply for two year A-level and those completing Year 11 can apply for IFP

Abbey College Manchester Curriculum

Year group	Course	Minimum Age	Entry requirements	UK students	International students
10	GCSE two year	14	• IELTS level 3.5/4.0		✓
11	GCSE one year	15	• Full programme: IELTS 4.5/5.0 • Partial programme: IELTS 3.5/4.0 • Completion of equivalent of GCSE • For re-sits minimum of Grade D or 3 in main subjects to be studied	✓	✓
12	A-level first year	16	• Grade A or 7+ in Maths and Grade B or 6+ in other subjects to be studied or in related subjects at GCSE • Grade A or 7+ in Maths and Grade B or 6+ in other subjects to be studied or in related subjects at GCSE, IGCSE or high school equivalent in home country • 5.5 in IELTS for restricted subjects and 6.0 for full range of choices	✓	✓

12	IFP two year	16	• Grade C or 4+ GCSE or high school equivalent in home country • 4.0 overall in IELTS in each component)		✓	✓
12	Mixed programme e.g. GCSE/ Combined Studies Programme	16	• Grade C or 4+ in GCSE, IGCSE or high school equivalent in home country • 4.5 in IELTS	✓	✓	
13	A-level (second year)	17	• First year of A-level with minimum Grade C in AS level or equivalent college tests	✓	✓	✓
13	IFP one year	17	• Completion of IGCSE or high school equivalent in home country plus one year of equivalent level 3 study • 5.0 in IELTS (preferably 5.5) • Entry at age 17 with IGCSE/WAEC 5 grades A*-C and IELTS 6.0 for Business pathway only		✓	✓
13	Preparation Pathway for University	17	• Completion of Year 12	✓		
14	Re-sit A-level	18	• Completed A-level study over two years achieving C grades or higher	✓	✓	✓
14	6 month IFP	18	• This course is on a case by case basis and is subject to availability after the September recruitment season. • Completed an IFP and failed narrowly or to gain the grade for university entry		✓	✓

			- Completed one year of A-level study or the full A-level - IELTS 6.0 overall (no less than 5.5 in any one component)			
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Subject option blocks

These may be amended subject to demand

GCSE subject options:

Up to 6 subjects can be taken

Dependent on level of English

Maths	English	Biology	Physics	Chemistry	
English (International)	IELTS	Photography	Religious Studies	Business	Further Maths
IELTS	Maths	General English	Econ	English	Additional Academic English
French	Art		Academic English	Academic English	

A-level options (Year 12):

3 subjects with Academic Enrichment and IELTS if required

Maths	Physics	Chemistry	Biology	Art	Success in the Sixth Form
Psychology	Religious Studies	Business	Photography	Economics	
		Textiles	Accounting	Further Maths	
	IELTS	IELTS	IELTS		

IFP Pathways (One Year):

Two subject strands with key skills and IELTS (if required)

- Business/Economics (Advanced Maths may be taken as an alternative strand)
- Business
- Engineering (Physics or Chemistry with Advanced Maths)
- Science (Biology and Chemistry)
- Medicine (Biology and Chemistry with Physics or Advanced Maths)
- Humanities (RS, Psychology)
- Creative Arts

IFP pathways (18 Month or Two Year)

- Two subject strands can be chosen from the subjects available dependent on level of English and availability
- Key skills and Academic English/IELTS

IFP pathways 6 month (January to June)

- Only discussed on a case-by-case basis

Subject strands available within the IFP Pathways

- Advanced Maths
- Art (Fine Art)
- Art (Fashion)
- Biology
- Business Strand 1
- Business Strand 2
- Chemistry
- Creative Communications
- Economics
- Environmental science
- Humanities 1
- Photography
- Physics
- Psychology
- Religious studies
- Textiles

Key Skills

- Maths or applied maths
- University skills

A-level Transfer Candidates

Requests to transfer from CIE AS levels to linear A-levels: our advice

- The CIE Exam board are still using the AS and A2 system; the AS components cannot be transferred to the new linear A-levels.
- It is possible for strong candidates to transfer into Year 13 and pick up the linear course; however, transferring to the IFP/CSP is the lower risk option and would be assessed at interview and on AS results.

Year 13 Transfers who are studying A-levels

- If a student has been studying linear A-levels, then the college will look at the examination boards and the content covered to suggest the best way forward. Students would need to have gained at least Grade B or C in the standalone AS level if taken or equivalent grades in school/college exams. Otherwise, they will reduce the risk by transferring to the International Foundation Programme or Combined Studies Programme.

A-level re-sits and from scratch subjects

- Students re-sitting will either join Year 13 or in the case of the science subjects, and demand on a year-by-year basis, a One Year A-level re-sit class.
- This would be suitable for from scratch students if they have studied either the full A-level in related subjects or the first year of A-level.
- Other subjects from scratch can be discussed at interview. Students attend Year 12 and 13 classes. A proven high level of academic performance is required.
- From scratch subjects attract a higher fee due to the additional lessons that are required per week.

Two-Year International Foundation Programme (Level 3 Study)

As the challenges of the linear A-level increase the pressure for all students we have continued to develop our two Year IFP programme as a pathway for students with a weaker academic profile or weaker English.

Entry level for new students:

- Students with minimum 4.0 IELTS overall with no component less than 4.0
- Students with Grade C/D or 4/3 at GCSE/IGCSE or high school equivalent in home country

Benefits of the two-year IFP

- The course allows students to continue to develop their English with an emphasis on Academic English and step up to IELTS. In some cases, English may be front loaded.
- The course gives access to a level 3 qualification for those students who do not meet the criteria for A-level study.
- Students can choose up to two suitable subject strands which will prepare them for the second year of study and lead them into the pathway of choice.
- Students will study key skills maths or applied maths, and research skills. In the summer of Year 12 exams/coursework components will be taken that contributes 25% of the overall IFP programme.
- This course reduces the risk for older students in light of the two year cap

- There is a jump on point in January so can offer this as an 18 month programme too (as long as students have at least 4.5 in IELTS)

Pathway examples:

- Business
- Business/Economics
- Creative Arts (Art and/or Photography)
- Humanities
- Sciences may be available if IELTS is the inhibiting factor

The ACM IFP is accepted by many universities on a wide range of courses. Entry requirements for universities range from 40% to 75% plus at the top end.

Students studying the two-year IFP are likely to be aiming for degree courses requiring 55% to 65% as their first choice.

Qualifications in home language

- International students are able to take a GCSE or full A-level in their first language if they like.
- There is a small additional cost attached to this which can be taken from a student's deposit.
- Please see the list of subjects available on the next page.

MFL

Level	Title	Board	Requires rubric explanation	Requires regular tuition	Oral required
IGCSE	First language Chinese	Cambridge	y	N	N
IGCSE	First language Japanese	Cambridge	Y	N	N Not offered so far
IGCSE	First language Russian	Edexcel	Y	N	N
IGCSE	First language Arabic	Edexcel	Y	N	N Candidates with very strong writing skills only
IGCSE	First language Portuguese	Edexcel	Y	N	N
GCSE	French	Cambridge	Y	y	Y
GCSE	German	AQA – review if we have candidates Could change boards	Y	y	Y
GCSE	Spanish	AQA – review if we have candidates Could change boards	Y	y	Y
A level	French	AQA	Y	Y	Y
A level	Spanish	Edexcel – may do AQA, dependent on the candidate	Y	Y	Y
A level	German	Edexcel (may do AQA, depending on the candidate)	Y	Y	Y

Preparation Pathway for University (one year)

About the Programme

The Preparation Pathway for University (PPU) is a pathway leading to a university degree or a degree with a foundation year at three universities. It comprises two optional subject strands each worth 37.5% and a compulsory key skills unit worth 25%.

Alongside subject content, the breadth and structure of the course develops language, knowledge, ICT and learning skills which are the wrap around skills for degree success.

The programme is modular, and examinations are taken in December, March and June with one re-sit opportunity in the June series. This allows students to build up their score and have a good idea of the level they are achieving as the course progresses.

The programme can be taken over one or two years. Two-year students would be expected to have 5 GCSE passes. One-year students would have studied a Year 12 or Year 13 Level 3 course prior to commencing the programme.

University places for PPU students are offered at:

- Aston University
- Bradford University
- Chester University
- Keele University
- Manchester Metropolitan University
- Teesside University
- Plymouth University
- Newcastle University (Pharmacy)

Academics from the universities visit the college regularly and visits are arranged to the universities

Pathways available:

See list of IFP pathways

Physical Health (Y10 and Y11)

The Year 10 and 11 Physical Health curriculum aims to ensure all students develop the knowledge, skills, and attitudes required to lead healthy, active lifestyles. This aligns with statutory requirements for Physical Education, Health Education, and whole-school approaches to wellbeing. The curriculum supports students' physical literacy, resilience, and understanding of how physical health contributes to overall wellbeing and academic success.

Topics include:

- Physical activity guidelines for young people
- Benefits of regular exercise (physical, cognitive, emotional)
- Healthy eating and nutrition (macronutrients, hydration, energy balance)

- Sleep and recovery
- Puberty, body changes, and healthy body image (aligned with statutory Health Education)
- Risks of sedentary lifestyles
- Mental health and physical activity linkages

All Y10 and Y11 students have one-hour of timetabled physical activity to promote personal development, health, fitness, and wellbeing.

All Y10 and Y11 students also have access to local space for outdoor play and recreation. They have compulsory experience of these outdoor recreation spaces during tutor time and optional availability for pupils to engage is also provided.

Enrichment

All students undertake compulsory enrichment for at least one hour per week. Students can change their options each term.