



Emmanuel's approach to ensuring outstanding academic achievement for all our students can be found in the College's Quality of Education policy. However, there are various elements of our approach to academic excellence in the Emmanuel College and Grace College Associated Sixth Form that, to achieve the best possible outcomes, parents/carers as well as students and teachers, should be aware of.

Expectations: effective working in the Sixth Form

Sixth Form students have embarked upon a phase in their education that will have a critical impact on their futures. Sixth Form is a significant period as young people move into adulthood and our approach helps foster the independence, time management and organisation required when they move on to pastures new. Two areas are key: the **time** that students should spend working and the **mindset** with which they should approach Sixth Form.

Taught lessons, directed learning periods and homework

Students receive five face-to-face taught lessons and two directed learning (DL) periods per subject. Directed learning periods engage students in further reading and investigation to deepen their understanding of subject topics as well as consolidating learning already covered. The combination of face-to-face learning and directed learning provides students with the guidance and independence needed to become well-rounded learners, ready to thrive in their chosen destination beyond Sixth Form.

During directed learning periods, students stay on site and work through the tasks assigned to them by their academic teachers. Directed learning periods are a compulsory part of a student's timetable and there are high expectations of student engagement during them; homework is set as an additional task. To maintain their progress through the curriculum students will receive a minimum of six hours of work outside of lesson time per subject each week. Those six hours will be a combination of directed tasks, revision and consolidation activities as well as directed homework tasks on new content.

The best guide for success in the Sixth Form is straightforward: students should complete revision and consolidation activities *in school* and homework *at home*. The reason for this is simple but vitally important: if work is completed that way around both will occur; if homework is completed in school, the revision and consolidation activities will be dropped.

A shift in mindset after GCSE

Successful Sixth Form learning starts with a change in mindset from GCSE learning. At GCSE level students attend lessons, complete their homework to the best of their ability in class and at home and bring it to the next lesson (in whatever state of completion they left it). This is not an approach that works in the Sixth Form: lesson time is not enough for a successful Sixth Form where a student achieves grades at grade B and above. Therefore, students are expected and required to seek out teachers' help between lessons when struggling on a piece of work. Students should

be working on the principle that when they hand in a piece of work, they know its quality because they have already sought any help required in advance of the deadline.

Progress: knowing whether students are on track

To ascertain students' progress through the curriculum, there are regular assessment points during the Sixth Form. There are five assessments in Year 12 and two assessments in Year 13:

Year 12	
Autumn term	Assessment 1; Assessment 2
Spring term	Assessment 3; <i>Pre-trial Assessment (optional)</i>
Summer term	Assessment 4 – Year 12 Trial Exams
Year 13	
Autumn term	Assessment 5
Spring term	Assessment 6 – Year 13 Trial Exams (January)
Summer term	A Level Final Exams

After each assessment students receive for each subject an **intellectual discipline (ID) grade** and a **trajectory grade**. The trajectory grade is the grade which students will achieve in the summer of Year 13 if they maintain their current working habits and level of responsibility. (See appendix 1 for the intellectual discipline grade descriptors.)

Where students are two grades or more below their target grade at any assessment point, a robust response from the Sixth Form team and the relevant academic department(s) will be put in place to support students in getting back on track. Responses to significant underachievement include:

- additional work being set;
- focused teaching activities;
- students being timetabled to attend Year 12, Year 13 or other available lessons;
- students being timetabled for additional directed study periods in College.

When it is identified that a student's intellectual discipline is at the heart of their lack of progress, it is likely that students will be placed on either a departmental or a Sixth Form report in order to support them to gain the necessary independence and responsibility of learning required.

Directed Study

Students who struggle to study independently, miss deadlines or repeatedly submit substandard work may be referred by their teacher to attend directed study (DS). This will involve the flexibility of some, or all, of a student's directed learning periods being removed, either in terms of *where a student should work* (i.e. they will be required to work in a silent study area) or *the work they should complete* in this period (e.g. work that has previously been submitted and requires improvement). Students can also be placed on DS by the Sixth Form team if a general study issue is identified. Being referred to attend DS may also impact on students' flexible timetables and they may be required to be present in College for a greater amount of the week. In some cases, it might be that a student is required to attend College after 3:40pm to complete missing work. This may be for discrete periods of time or for a more prolonged period depending on the particular situation.

Revision: when students should be revising

At Sixth Form level, students should be revising on a weekly basis for all their subjects: the most successful students are ones who build in dedicated revision time every week for each subject. Students whose weekly diet of work consists just of completing new tasks and cramming before each assessment always find that they achieve grades that

constitute far less than their personal best. The complexity and the quantity of content in Sixth Form subjects require students to be revising every week in each of their subjects. The Sixth Form personal development programme will support students in learning the most effective revision strategies, but it is important to stress that effective revision begins with students planning it into their weekly schedule of work starting at the beginning of September.

Progression beyond Emmanuel: predicted grades

Students applying to university will be completing university applications in the autumn term of Year 13. A key part of a student's application is their predicted grades, which will be provided by their subject teachers. Teachers will use the results from the Sixth Form assessment cycle to inform a student's predicted grade and students will be issued with a provisional UCAS predicted grade after the trial exam in the summer of Year 12. It is essential that students understand that teachers have an obligation to decide predicted grades on an informed basis, using evidence of student progress from their assessments. It is crucial therefore that when assessment grades indicate a student is working below their target that both student and the student's family respond promptly to any changes to working habits that may be required. A student with a history of underachievement will not be able to request an increased UCAS predicted grade unless there is evidence to support such an application.

Beginnings: how to make the best possible start to Year 12

Transition from GCSE to A Level study is often found to be the hardest academic transition that students will undertake. To make the best possible start to Year 12, there are three straightforward, but essential, things that students should prioritise:

1. Ensuring summer transition work been completed to the best of their ability. Tasks have been carefully selected by academic departments to introduce the content students will meet at A Level. The work isn't onerous but students who don't complete it will be at a disadvantage from the first lesson.
2. The importance of lesson time. Lessons are crucial: students must attend all lessons and be on time for those lessons. Whilst there is a temptation to adopt a slightly more relaxed approach to studies in the Sixth Form, in reality lessons are more important than they were in Year 11.
3. Be in the habit of completing all work set by subject teachers right from the very start of Sixth Form.

How parents can support their children

As students step into Sixth Form studies we want them to flourish, gaining the essential skills of independence and self-sufficiency that will stand them in good stead for life beyond Emmanuel. It is natural to take the view that Sixth Form students can be left to their own devices rather more than previously. However to give Sixth Form students the very best chance of being successful at A Level we've found that students need *more* support not less to be successful at A Level. We refer to the 'tripod' of student-parent/carer-teacher a great deal with younger students and it is as vital as ever when students reach the Sixth Form. Here are two practical suggestions that will help you support your children in their efforts to gain grades at B and above that will prove most useful to them on their academic journey:

1. Help your child to have a **colour-coded study plan for the week**. The most successful students have a weekly plan they use each week and amend as necessary. It gives them an at-a-glance plan of when they need to be working on new content or completing revision tasks. Parents/carers have told us in the past that they find it enormously helpful to sit down with their child to agree a study plan for the week ahead: when they will work in the evening and at weekends. As a rule of thumb, students should be completing 1hr30mins each evening and with similar time at the weekend. If your child is not completing any work at home this should be a significant concern to you and a red flag that they will be falling behind their peers in their academic progress. An issue of the utmost importance is planning how students will use the flexibility that is a feature of Emmanuel Sixth Form life. Students may choose to arrive in College at 8:25am and remain for the full day working on site, but they have the flexibility to decide when and where to work around their mandatory sessions. Discussions with parents/carers will be vital (especially at the beginning of

Year 12) to helping students ensure they are doing the necessary amount of work each week now they are not required to spend all day on site.

2. We strongly encourage parents/carers to embrace the idea of **two 5-minute 'bookend' conversations each day**. This entails having one short five-minute conversation after your child has returned home from College in which you will discuss which work and what tasks they are planning to complete that evening. The second conversation will occur when the student has completed their work for the evening: it will discuss how the work has gone, the tasks that remain outstanding and whether additional help is required from teachers. We cannot stress enough the value and power of these short conversations for supporting students. It is important not to let students off the hook when they are asked about how things went and they respond with a non-specific 'fine'. Parents/carers do not have to be experts in every academic field to be able to support their children: the power of the conversations lies in the way they prompt students to develop their skills of independence and self-sufficiency. Being able to talk through their work, even for a short period, with someone who is deeply interested in their progress will have a considerable impact.

Part-time work

We acknowledge that many students will wish to take up paid work alongside their academic studies during their time in the Sixth Form. Historically we have stipulated that when this is the case a student will do **no more than 10 hours** of paid employment each week. In light of the flexibility that is built into a Sixth Form student's week, we do ask that no shifts are taken during the school day. This is in case students are required to attend College outside of their taught lessons and directed learning periods. It is important to emphasise that if students are falling behind with their studies they will need to come into College for full days and part-time work is not an acceptable reason for not doing so. An essential element of the Sixth Form learning agreement is that students attend College whenever they are required to ensure they are making the necessary progress. It is also important to note that as students move from Year 12 into Year 13 the expected amount of work they should be completing will increase, not least in terms of a greater amount of independent work.

Academic mentors

In line with our concern to further students' flexibility and independence, tutoring works differently in the Sixth Form. All students are allocated an academic mentor and they meet with them in a smaller group than in younger years. There are around ten students in each academic mentor group. Students meet as a group each week with their academic mentor in one timetabled session that may be in the 8:25-8:50am registration slot or at another point during the working week. Academic mentors are responsible for assisting with applications to university and apprenticeships, including the writing of supporting references. They offer pastoral guidance and their key role is helping to ensure students are making the progress they should. Discussions will involve the results of the Sixth Form assessment cycle, the extent of a student's adjustment to good Sixth Form working habits (including in attendance and punctuality) as well as advising on future pathways. Students may speak with their academic mentor on an individual basis whenever they need to. Building an honest, constructive working relationship with an academic mentor is important and they provide the first point of contact for parents/carers if there are issues to be dealt with. The Sixth Form team are always available to support students and it may be that the academic mentor refers a concern or query to them.

Attendance and punctuality

Emmanuel's approach to attendance and punctuality for all our students can be found in the College's Attendance Policy. The importance of excellent attendance and punctuality in the Sixth Form is as, if not more, important than for younger years in relation to maintaining academic progress. Students who miss significant portions of lesson time are much less likely to secure the good A Level grades that will take them to their preferred next destination. Point two of the Sixth Form Learning Agreement is: *Maintain an excellent record of attendance and punctuality*. Students whose attendance is a concern may have their timetable flexibility withdrawn, being required to attend College from 8:25am until 3:40pm, for example. They will register with a member of the Sixth Form team in the morning in such a circumstance. Students whose attendance is consistently poor may be asked to repeat the year or be invited to discuss

their future at College in parental meetings with a member of the Sixth Form team and, if necessary, the Vice Principal or Head of School/Principal (except in specific circumstances where alternative arrangements have been agreed). Similarly, students who are persistently late to College and/or lessons will receive sanctions, including potential withdrawal of some or all of their timetable flexibility.

Study spaces

There are a range of **spaces** that Sixth Form students can use. Students can select to work in a silent workspace in either the **library** or the **open areas**. Alternatively, they can choose the **Loaves and Fishes** restaurant where they can engage in group work and support each other in deepening understanding and completing tasks. Wherever possible, students will be able to seek out workspaces in **departmental areas** where support and guidance can be provided by subject specialists. (This must be agreed with teaching staff.) In addition, the **Sixth Form Centre** is a dual-use space: alongside a small study area, the bistro enables students to work on any tasks that a café-style space lends itself to. We are thrilled that Emmanuel has improved its facilities to benefit the Sixth Form experience, but it is important that good habits are built from the beginning of Year 12. It perhaps goes without saying that students choosing the spaces that work well for them is much preferable to them being directed to work in a specific location due to an academic concern arising. Where students are working and how productively, both on and off site, would be a profitable topic for parents/carers as well as academic mentors in their regular discussions.

Appendix 1: Intellectual discipline (ID)

The Emmanuel College and Grace College Associated Sixth Form involves learning how to think. Knowing how to think, we know how to learn. Thinking and learning require intellectual discipline. The Intellectual Virtues Academy (IVA) in Long Beach, California has identified nine aspects of intellectual discipline and organised them within three categories, corresponding to three stages of learning: getting the learning process started and headed in the right direction; making the learning process go well and overcoming challenges to productive learning.

GETTING STARTED

1. **Curiosity:** a disposition to wonder, ponder, and ask why. A thirst for understanding and a desire to explore. Slogan: *Ask questions!*
2. **Intellectual humility:** a willingness to own up to one's intellectual limitations and mistakes. Unconcerned with intellectual status or prestige. Slogan: *Admit what you don't know!*
3. **Intellectual autonomy:** a capacity for active, self-directed thinking. An ability to think and reason for oneself. Slogan: *Think for yourself!*

EXECUTING WELL

1. **Attentiveness:** a readiness to be "personally present" in the learning process. Keeps distractions at bay. Strives to be mindful and engaged. Slogan: *Look and listen!*
2. **Intellectual carefulness:** a sensitivity to the requirements of good thinking. Quick to notice and avoid intellectual pitfalls and mistakes. Slogan: *Think with care!*
3. **Intellectual thoroughness:** a willingness to probe for deeper meaning and understanding. Unsatisfied with mere appearances or easy answers. Slogan: *Go deep!*

HANDLING CHALLENGES

1. **Open-mindedness:** an ability to think outside the box. Gives a fair and honest hearing to competing perspectives. Slogan: *Think outside the box!*
2. **Intellectual courage:** a readiness to persist in thinking or communicating in the face of fear, including fear of embarrassment or failure. Slogan: *Take risks!*
3. **Intellectual tenacity:** a willingness to embrace intellectual challenge and struggle. Keeps its "eyes on the prize" and doesn't give up. Slogan: *Embrace struggle!*

In sixth form, teachers determine your child's Intellectual Discipline (ID) grade based on a range of factors. ID is scored on a scale of 1–4 and is not a measure of behaviour; it reflects the degree to which students demonstrate the habits and approaches of an effective learner. The descriptors that follow give **typical examples** associated with each grade, but individual grades are awarded using professional judgement and consideration of the wider context. The grades are applied as follows:

1. Everything that has been asked of you, both in terms of work completion and attitude in class, has been done. Sustained effort at this level gives you the best possible chance of achieving your target grade.
2. All tasks set by teachers have been attempted, but not to the highest standard possible. Continuing at this level will make achieving target grades increasingly less likely if you do not proactively seek out help and guidance about producing work that reflects your personal best.
3. Some required tasks are incomplete or poorly attempted **and/or** deadlines for homework and independent study are not met. Effort and engagement may be inconsistent. Without improvement, this will result in you falling further behind and achieving a grade well below your target.
4. Most or all tasks are either incomplete or only completed to a very poor standard. Continuing at this level is a serious cause for concern and risks failing the course.