

PORTADOWN COLLEGE

GCSE SUBJECT INFORMATION BOOKLET

2025-26

CONTENTS

GCSE Curriculum Guidance	3
Choosing your GCSE subjects	4
Agriculture & Land Use	5
Art & Design	6
Biology	7
Business Communication Systems	8
Business Studies	9
Chemistry	10
Digital Technology Multimedia	11
Digital Technology Programming	12
Drama	13
English Language	14
English Literature	15
Food & Nutrition	16
French	17
Further Mathematics	18
Geography	19
Health & Social Care	20
History	21
Learning for Life & Work	22
Mathematics	23
Moving Image Arts	24
Music	25
Physical Education	26
Physics	27
Religious Studies	28
Single Award Science	29
Spanish	30
Technology and Design	31
Admissions Criteria	32

GCSE CURRICULUM GUIDANCE

College Curriculum

Portadown College offers a broad, balanced and relevant curriculum to encompass the needs, interests and aptitudes of individual students as well as of our economy. An appropriate emphasis is placed on Games, Physical Education, Careers Education, Citizenship and Personal and Social Development through the curriculum and the wide range of extra-curricular activities on offer in the school.

The College respects the right of parents/carers who wish to withdraw students from collective worship.

Compulsory Subjects

English Language

Mathematics

Physics or Chemistry or Biology or Single Award Science

English Literature

Religious Studies

Option Subjects

* Agriculture and Land Use

Art & Design

Biology

* Business Communication Systems

* Business Studies

Chemistry

* Digital Technology Multimedia

* Digital Technology Programming

* Drama

Food and Nutrition

French

** Further Mathematics

Geography

* Health and Social Care

History

* Learning for Life and Work

* Moving Image Arts

Music

* Physical Education

Physics

Single Award Science

Spanish

Technology and Design

Key Stage 4 (Year 11)

The majority of students entering Year 11 in September 2024 will study 9 full course subjects leading to GCSE awards at the end of Year 12.

Students who apply for and are allocated a place to study Further Mathematics will complete 10 GCSE subjects.

All students are required to study at least one Science option. To meet this requirement, students can study one, two or all three of the separate Sciences (i.e. Biology, Chemistry and Physics) or study Single Award Science only instead.



Subjects marked * can be taken as GCSE options without prior experience at Key Stage 3. ** Any Year 10 student wishing to take GCSE Further Mathematics will be required to sit a Mathematics assessment for selection for the course. The assessment will take place in the College following confirmation that a student has secured a place in the College. Please note: the GCSE curricular offer is correct at the time of publication. As such, it may be subject to change and verification.

- Some restrictions on students taking particular subjects may be required if the subjects are over or undersubscribed. We endeavour to facilitate individual choice. However, this is not always possible.
- If a subject is oversubscribed, places will be allocated based on the order of preference on the subject choice form. Where places are tied, the allocation will be based on available Key Stage 3 data.
- The offer and delivery of a subject may be withdrawn should student uptake not be viable.

CHOOSING YOUR GCSE SUBJECTS

Be informed

You will spend a long time studying each of your subjects, so it is well worth taking time to find out all you can about them before you make your choices. You should:

- find out all you can about the kinds of career you might be interested in e.g. www.nidirect.gov.uk/careers www.informedchoices.ac.uk icould.com can be accessed on the internet.
- read the relevant pages in this booklet.
- talk to students already doing the subjects at GCSE.
- research new subjects very carefully.
- Speak to the Head or Deputy Head of CEIAG (Careers Education Information Advice and Guidance) if required before making your final choice.

Be ready for a new challenge

No matter what subjects you choose, you will find GCSE work very different to Year 8-10:

- You have more work to do, even though you have fewer subjects.
- You must regularly revise your work at home, to consolidate it and keep on top of it.
- You have to complete your Controlled Assessment Tasks in certain subjects as well as preparing for your final GCSE exams.





AGRICULTURE & LAND USE

Examination Board: CCEA

What is this subject about?

Agriculture & Land Use is designed to appeal not only to young people from the changing agricultural sector but also those who are interested in working within the wider land-based and environmental industries. This is an applied course which has been designed to motivate students to take charge of their own learning and to develop knowledge and practical skills in agriculture and other land use. It is designed for those who have an interest in Agriculture, Horticulture, Veterinary Science or other Land-Based careers.

Those who do the course need to have a willingness to participate in Field Trips, handle small/farm animals and work with plants, soil and garden tools.

What will I study and how will I be assessed?

CONTENT	ASSESSMENT	%
Unit 1: Soils, Crops and Habitats	External Examination	25%
Unit 2: Animals on the land	External Examination	25%
Unit 3: Controlled Assessment	Controlled Assessment: Planning and Investigation Research and Presentation	50%

What can this subject lead to?

The Agri-Food industry contributes hugely to the local economy representing employment for around 50,000 people in farms, factories and the Agri-Food sector. Several prominent Agri-Food businesses are located in the Portadown area. It also develops skills necessary for A Level Science study.



ART & DESIGN

Examination Board: CCEA

What is this subject about?

Students of GCSE Art & Design engage in a critical, practical and theoretical study of Art & Design. They develop an appreciation of the work of artists, designers and craft workers from a range of cultural backgrounds. Students can also develop their artistic creative practice through a wide range of exciting media and processes.

What will I study and how will I be assessed?		
CONTENT	ASSESSMENT	%
<p>Component 1 Part A: Exploratory Portfolio</p> <p>Part B: Investigating the Creative and Cultural Industries</p> <p>This is a linear qualification</p>	<p>Part A: Controlled assessment Internally set and assessed; Externally moderated</p> <p>Part B: Controlled assessment Internally set and assessed; Teacher sets tasks based on examples from controlled assessment booklet which is set by CCEA (Externally moderated).</p>	<p>60%</p> <p>Part A: 25% 50 marks Part B: 35% 70 Marks</p>
<p>Component 2 Externally Set Assignment</p>	<p>Controlled Assessment Externally set examination Internally assessed Externally moderated A stimulus paper is set by CCEA. This provides a choice of theme starting points.</p>	<p>40% 80 Marks</p>

What can this subject lead to?

This course prepares students for the study of Art & Design and related courses at A Level and beyond. It also provides students who have an interest in developing a career in Art & Design with relevant, skills based knowledge.

Possible Careers include Media, Graphics, Web Design, Architecture, Textile Design, Fashion, Buying, Interior Design, Teaching and Art Therapy.



BIOLOGY

Examination Board: CCEA

What is this subject about?

Biology has the greatest factual content of the three sciences and involves a substantial mathematical component. It includes a study of Plant and Animal Biology along with ecology, genetics and microorganisms. Students considering doing A Level Biology are strongly advised to take GCSE chemistry and for A Level Life and Health Science must have studied GCSE Chemistry.

What will I study and how will I be assessed?

CONTENT	ASSESSMENT	%
Unit 1 Cells, Living Processes and Biodiversity	External Examination 1 hour 15 mins	35%
Unit 2 Body Systems, Genetics, Microorganisms and Health	External Examination 1 hour 30 mins	40%
Unit 3 Practical Assessment	Booklet A (7.5%) Two externally marked pre-release practicals in Year 12 Booklet B (17.5%) External written examination on practical work 1 hour	25%

What can this subject lead to?

Studying Biology at GCSE can lead to A Level which opens up a vast range of careers including medicine, dentistry, veterinary science, agriculture, biosciences, ecology, forensics, genetics, marine biology and entomology among others.



BUSINESS COMMUNICATION SYSTEMS

Examination Board: CCEA

What is this subject about?

The BCS qualification provides students with a unique chance to explore both Business and Digital content. They will study a range of business topics such as Marketing, Human Resources, Business ownership, Stakeholders, and develop digital skills using various different pieces of software.

What will I study and how will I be assessed?

CONTENT	ASSESSMENT	%
Unit 1: Software Applications for Business Students will use a range of applications including: spreadsheets, databases, web development, email, internet, word processing and presentations.	External computer based examination 2 hours	40%
Unit 2: The Business Environment Recruitment, selection, training, marketing and implications of digital technology for business. Students consider different roles, including stakeholders and customers, as well as how best to communicate a message.	External Examination 1 hour	35%
Unit 3: Developing Digital Solutions A practical unit where students use the skills they have developed in the previous units to plan and develop a digital solution for a business.	Controlled Assessment	25%

What can this subject lead to?

By studying this GCSE, students will gain a thorough understanding of the business environment and develop versatile digital skills using various software applications. The course emphasises the development of technical, business, and soft skills, such as critical thinking and communication, which are highly transferable. Students can continue their education at A-level by choosing CCEA A Level in Digital Technology and/or Business Studies. This qualification opens up numerous career opportunities, not only in Business and IT but also in areas like Digital Marketing, Project Management, Data Science, and Web Development.



BUSINESS STUDIES

Examination Board: CCEA

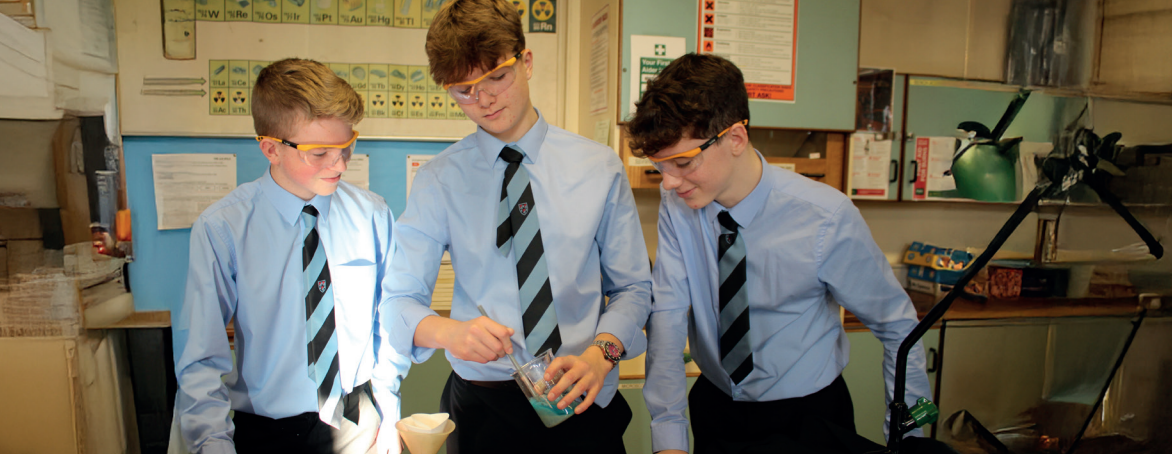
What is this subject about?

Business Studies is an investigation into how businesses work, make their decisions and the influences that shape this process. It looks at how businesses are formed, how they produce their goods and services and how they market these to customers. In addition it examines how businesses are funded, the management and motivation of people, how they grow and what is meant by a business plan. Business studies is suited to students who have a keen interest in the world about them, how businesses work and those who have desire to become entrepreneurs themselves. It will develop good skills in literacy and numeracy – as there is a need to construct business reports and handle financial data; working with others – research tasks, communication and use of ICT.

What will I study and how will I be assessed?		
CONTENT	ASSESSMENT	%
Unit 1: Starting a business <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Creating a business • Business operations • Marketing 	External Examination 1 hour 30 mins	40%
Unit 2: Developing a business <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Finance • Human resources • Business Growth 	External Examination 1 hour 30 mins	40%
Unit 3: Planning a business Practical Assessment	Controlled Assessment Students complete a research task and write up a report based on this research	20%

What can this subject lead to?

There are many career opportunities both directly in business, as well as areas such as marketing, management, accountancy and research. Students can go on to study A level Business Studies and then a range of business related courses at university. These include opportunities to combine business with a foreign language.



CHEMISTRY

Examination Board: CCEA

What is this subject about?

Chemistry is a challenging subject requiring serious study. While Chemistry requires understanding and recall of specific scientific facts, students are also expected to be able to conduct experiments and interpret observations in terms of scientific principles and to carry out relevant calculations. Students are encouraged to develop their curiosity about the material and physical worlds and the course provides insight into and experience of how science works. It also enables students to engage with Chemistry in their everyday lives and to make informed choices both about further study in Chemistry and their careers.

What will I study and how will I be assessed?

CONTENT	ASSESSMENT	%
Unit 1 Structures, Trends, Chemical Reactions, Quantitative Chemistry and Analysis	External Examination 1 hour 15 mins	35%
Unit 2 Further Chemical Reactions, Rates and Equilibrium, Calculations and Organic Chemistry	External Examination 1 hour 30 mins	40%
Unit 3 Practical Skills	Booklet A (7.5%) Two externally marked pre-release practicals in Year 12 Booklet B (17.5%) External written examination on practical work 1 hour	25%

What can this subject lead to?

Chemistry can lead to a wide variety of rewarding careers including medicine, dentistry, veterinary medicine, pharmacy, engineering, research and food science.

Students who are interested in studying Chemistry or Life & Health Sciences at A Level need to sit all GCSE Chemistry units at Higher Tier.



DIGITAL TECHNOLOGY MULTIMEDIA

Examination Board: CCEA

What is this subject about?

Digital Technology is rapidly transforming how we live, learn, and work. This skills-based course will enhance your proficiency in applications like spreadsheets, website and database development. You'll also explore a variety of exciting topics, including Software, Big Data, Networks, Cloud Computing and Cyber Security.

What will I study and how will I be assessed?

CONTENT	ASSESSMENT	%
Unit 1: Digital Technology Digital Data, Computer Hardware, Network Topologies, Spreadsheet Applications, Cyperspace, Cloud Technology and Digital Applications.	External Examination 1 hour	30%
Unit 2: Digital Authoring Concepts HTML, Database Development, Multimedia Design and Testing.	External Examination 1 hour 30 mins	40%
Unit 3: Digital Authoring Practice A practical unit where students will create an interactive website and a database system.	Controlled Assessment	30%

What can this subject lead to?

Northern Ireland boasts one of the fastest-growing tech sectors in the UK. Pursuing a GCSE in Digital Technology equips students with essential skills for the future, providing a strong foundation for various career paths and further studies. This subject enhances practical skills, problem-solving, critical thinking, communication, and collaboration abilities, which are valuable across many industries.

A GCSE in Digital Technology prepares students for further studies at Key Stage 5 and beyond, with career opportunities including Data Scientists, Mobile App Developers, Business Analysts, Artificial Intelligence Specialists, Web Developers, and Cloud Engineers.



DIGITAL TECHNOLOGY PROGRAMMING

Examination Board: CCEA

What is this subject about?

Software is the backbone of global computer systems and this subject provides the opportunity for students to develop their programming skills. Some of the theory topics studied include software, hardware, networks, software development trends, programming constructs, and basic error-handling techniques. Opportunities will be provided in the classroom for students to apply their knowledge in real-life contexts.

What will I study and how will I be assessed?

CONTENT	ASSESSMENT	%
Unit 1: Digital Technology Digital Data, Computer Hardware, Network Topologies, Spreadsheet Applications, Cyperspace, Cloud Technology and Digital Applications.	External Examination 1 hour	30%
Unit 2: Digital Development Concepts Data representations, algorithms, programming constructs, simple error and handling techniques and contemporary trends in software development.	External Examination 1 hour 30 mins	40%
Unit 3: Digital Authoring Practice A practical unit where students are given the opportunity to design, develop and test code solutions using a programming language.	Controlled Assessment	30%

What can this subject lead to?

Northern Ireland's digital sector is growing faster than most of the UK, offering a wide range of job opportunities in the tech industry. A GCSE in Programming equips students with strong programming skills and a variety of transferable skills in different development environments. Skills and capabilities will be developed including; research, investigation, analysis, communication, problem-solving, and teamwork.

Pursuing this GCSE subject can lead to apprenticeships and further studies, such as the WJEC A Level in Computer Science or the CCEA A Level in Digital Technology. The skills acquired are highly valuable and applicable across many industries, providing a solid foundation for a wide array of career opportunities.



DRAMA

Examination Board: CCEA

What is this subject about?

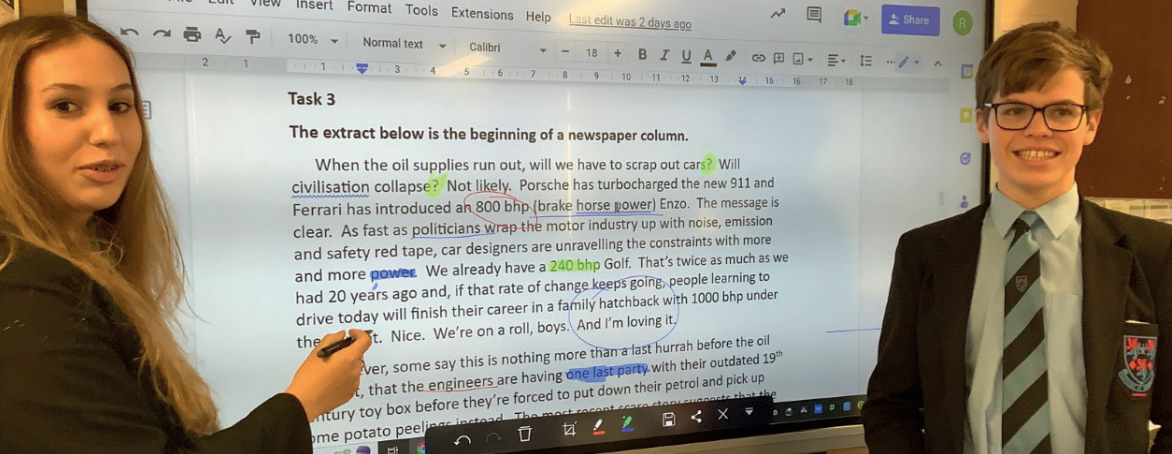
No experience of Drama is necessary in order to study it at GCSE Level. Key skills include: creativity, working with others, problem-solving, communication, negotiation, self-discipline, time-management, setting deadlines and meeting targets. Drama students should learn to understand the practical components of the theatre and develop the ability to understand and respond to a wide range of dramatic productions. Opportunities to visit the theatre help to develop a lifelong interest in drama.

Students can follow a design pathway which includes no performances in either practical component. They can choose from: Costume, Lighting, Multimedia, Sound or Set.

What will I study and how will I be assessed?		
CONTENT	ASSESSMENT	%
<p>Component 1: Devised Performance Group performance of devised drama with accompanying candidate log</p> <p>Candidates will choose a performance or design pathway for this component</p>	External Examination 1 hour	30%
<p>Component 2: Scripted Performance Group performance of scripted drama</p> <p>Candidates will choose a performance or design pathway for this component</p>	External Examination 1 hour 30 mins	40%
<p>Component 3: Written Examination on a set text</p>	Controlled Assessment	30%

What can this subject lead to?

Students can study Drama and Theatre at A Level. A joint degree in English and Drama is a regular choice for students at university. The skills and confidence acquired during the course are transferable and students have gone on to have a wide range of careers which have some link back to the course. These include law, public relations, teaching, arts administration, publishing and technical support in the theatre.



ENGLISH LANGUAGE

Examination Board: CCEA

What is this subject about?

Competency in English Language is foundational to success in all careers. Studying English Language enhances the inter-personal skills necessary in every profession ranging from public relations, media communications, legal services, corporate management, the service and entertainment industries to allied health professions.

What will I study and how will I be assessed?

CONTENT	ASSESSMENT	%
Unit 1: Writing for Purpose and Audience and Reading to Access Non-Fiction and Media Texts	External Examination Untiered 1 hour 45 mins Students respond to five tasks	30%
Unit 2: Speaking and Listening	Controlled Assessment Untiered	20%
Unit 3: Studying Spoken and Written Languages	Controlled Assessment Untiered	20%
Unit 4: Personal and Creative Writing and Reading Literary and Non-Fiction Texts	External Examination Untiered 1 hour 45 mins Students respond to five tasks	30%

What can this subject lead to?

Students can study Drama and Theatre at A Level. A joint degree in English and Drama is a regular choice for students at university. The skills and confidence acquired during the course are transferable and students have gone on to have a wide range of careers which have some link back to the course. These include law, public relations, teaching, arts administration, publishing and technical support in the theatre.



ENGLISH LITERATURE

Examination Board: CCEA

What is this subject about?

English Literature fosters a life-long enjoyment of prose, drama and poetry through creative and critical engagement with a range of texts. It also develops a range of skills such as the ability to think independently, research, plan, and reason coherently. Opportunities for cultural outings enhance engagement with literature while highlighting the importance of the arts in the business and economic sectors.

What will I study and how will I be assessed?

CONTENT	ASSESSMENT	%
<p>Unit 1: The Study of Prose</p>	<p>External Examination 1 hour 45 mins Students answer two questions Section A is closed book</p>	30%
<p>Unit 2: The Study of Drama and Poetry</p>	<p>External Examination 2 hours Students answer two questions Section A and B are open book</p>	50%
<p>Unit 3: The Study of Shakespeare</p>	<p>Controlled Assessment 2 hours Students complete an extended writing question based on a theme</p>	20%

What can this subject lead to?

Many who study English Literature progress to English Literature at A Level which opens opportunities to careers in the creative industries such as writing, film studies, publishing, acting, journalism, broadcasting and the arts. Other pathways include law, finance, health, civil service, marketing, human resources and management. Skills enhanced in the study of English Literature include communication, selection, synthesis, analysis and empathy.



FOOD & NUTRITION

Examination Board: CCEA

What is this subject about?

Students will learn about the nutritional content of foods and specific nutritional needs within a multicultural society, reflecting current government guidelines. They will also study how to be an effective consumer in relation to food choice, food safety and managing resources. Technological and scientific developments within the food industry will be explored.

Students will be provided with opportunities to apply their knowledge to ‘real-life’ contexts and to develop their confidence in demonstrating high level food practical skills. Skills and capabilities will be developed including communication, ICT, problem solving, self-management, working with others, managing information and creativity.

What will I study and how will I be assessed?

CONTENT	ASSESSMENT	%
Component 1 Food and Nutrition	External Examination	50%
Component 2 Practical Food and Nutrition	Controlled Assessment: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Research & Viewpoints • Justification of choice • Planning • Practical activity • Evaluation 	50%

What can this subject lead to?

This subject will empower students; help them to develop as individuals, as contributors to society, to the economy and the environment. In addition, this GCSE provides students with academic excellence and is successful in preparing students for Key Stage 5 education, attendance at universities and the world of work. This qualification will give the student the preparation they need to succeed in the food, health and hospitality industries, to name a few, as well as giving them vital life skills.



FRENCH

Examination Board: CCEA

What is this subject about?

GCSE French is for students who want to develop their existing language skills and become more confident at communicating in and understanding French. This course will help students discover and enjoy learning about the culture of French-speaking countries and communities. There is the possibility of a visit to a French-speaking country, as well as other trips connected to learning French. GCSE French is a challenging and dynamic course that will develop your problem-solving and research skills, improve your memory and broaden your cultural awareness.

Students may choose a Modern Language GCSE which they have previously studied to a suitable level. However, where this is not the case, interested students should contact the Head of Department to discuss options. It is also possible to choose more than one language.

What will I study and how will I be assessed?

CONTENT	ASSESSMENT	%
Unit 1: Listening	External Examination	25%
Unit 2: Speaking	One teacher facilitated and externally marked speaking examination	25%
Unit 3: Reading	External Examination	25%
Unit 4: Writing	External Examination	25%

What can this subject lead to?

French is globally recognized as a language of culture and business and your skills will be seen as a real asset. GCSE French can help students take their place in a multilingual global society through a wide range of enhanced career opportunities at home and on an international level. You will lay the foundations for studying French at A-Level, at university or beyond. You may even choose to study a new language and a GCSE will open the door to that opportunity. You will enjoy future travel and cultural experiences in French-speaking countries even more with the skill to communicate in the language.



FURTHER MATHEMATICS

Examination Board: CCEA

Admission to GCSE Further Mathematics is through the Year 10 Further Maths Assessment. Please see the College website under Parents/Policies & Documents for more details.

What is this subject about?

This is a subject developed for high-attaining students who wish to broaden their mathematical experience. The course provides the essential foundation for study of A Level Mathematics and is also a very useful subject for those students wishing to study A Level Physics.

What will I study and how will I be assessed?

CONTENT	ASSESSMENT	%
Unit 1: Pure Mathematics Algebra, Trigonometry, Logarithms, Matrices, Differentiation & Integration.	External Examination With calculator 2 hours	50%
Unit 2: Mechanics, Kinematics, Vectors, Forces, Newton's Laws & Moments.	External Examination With calculator 1 hour	25%
Unit 3: Statistics Location and Dispersion, Probability, Binomial Distribution, Normal Distribution, Bivariate Analysis.	External Examination With calculator 1 hour	25%

What can this subject lead to?

Further Mathematics allows students to access the knowledge and develop the skills for the study of subjects such as sciences, geography, business, economics and technology. This will lead many of them to careers in science, engineering, finance and accounting.



GEOGRAPHY

Examination Board: CCEA

What is this subject about?

GCSE Geography is a current, relevant and engaging subject which allows students to develop a greater knowledge and understanding of both physical and human environments. By studying Geography, students learn about the importance of sustainable development in today's ever changing world, as well as developing skills in literacy, numeracy, graphicacy and oral presentation. Fieldwork includes visits to Newcastle, Titanic Quarter and Portadown Town Centre. The department runs optional school visits abroad and in the past, these have included trips to Paris, Rome, Barcelona and Munich.

What will I study and how will I be assessed?

CONTENT	ASSESSMENT	%
Unit 1: Understanding our Natural World Rivers Coasts Weather and Climate Restless Earth	External Examination 1 hour 30 mins	40%
Unit 2: Living in Our World Population and Migration Changing Urban Areas Contrasts in World Development Managing Our Environment	External Examination 1 hour 30 mins	40%
Unit 3: Fieldwork Skills and Techniques	External Examination 1 hour	20%

What can this subject lead to?

Geography students are highly employable as Geography develops a broad range of skills relevant to a wide range of career options including Geographical Information Systems, planning, environmental science, risk management and resource management. Geographers are also highly regarded in the areas of teaching, social work, law, journalism and human resources.



HEALTH & SOCIAL CARE

Examination Board: CCEA

What is this subject about?

Students learn about human development through the main life stages and age ranges; factors affecting health and development, including behavioural, environmental, physical and socio-economic factors; how relationships influence social and emotional development; how a range of factors influence self-concept; major life changes and sources of support.

How health and social care services meet a range of service users' needs; barriers to health and social care services and how they can be overcome; job roles of a range of practitioners and how they apply the values of care in their day-to-day work; and the importance of safeguarding in health, social care and early years settings, will be studied.

What will I study and how will I be assessed?

CONTENT	ASSESSMENT	%
Unit 1: Personal Development, Health and Well-Being	External written examination 1 hour 30 mins 100 marks	60%
Unit 2: Working in the Health, Social Care and Early Years Sectors	Controlled assessment. Students write 5000 words on a CCEA set task. 100 marks Internal Assessment CCEA Moderation	40%

What can this subject lead to?

Students will develop knowledge, understanding and skills such as, critical and analytical decision making and problem solving, required for working in the areas of health, social care and early years. They will build on the skills and capabilities developed at Key Stage 3; and have opportunities to engage actively to develop as effective and independent students. Working with others, communicating orally and in written form, planning learning, meeting deadlines and the ability to work independently will be experienced. Entering the world of work, progression to a range of vocational and academic courses tailored to meet students' needs are all opportunities.



HISTORY

Examination Board: CCEA

What is this subject about?

GCSE History covers a number of topics; from Hitler's Germany to the Troubles in NI and Superpower relations from World War Two until the end of the Cold War. A range of skills are developed including the ability to communicate in both oral and written form, to work with others, to listen to and accept differing views, to extract information from a range of source materials and to reason and present organised and supported arguments.

What will I study and how will I be assessed?

CONTENT	ASSESSMENT	%
<p>Unit 1: Modern world studies in depth: Life in Nazi Germany 1933-1945</p> <p>Local Study: Changing Relations: NI 1965-1998</p>	External Examination 1 hour 45 mins	60%
<p>Unit 2: Outline Study: International Relations 1945-2003</p>	External Examination 1 hour 15 mins	40%

What can this subject lead to?

History is highly regarded by universities and employers alike. It develops skills of critical thinking, reasoning and debate which are sought after and valued in the workplace. History provides many career options including accountancy, law, the media, teaching, sport and business.



LEARNING FOR LIFE & WORK

Examination Board: CCEA

What is this subject about?

Aimed at students who have an interest in developing key life skills, enjoy group work and active learning and the completion of projects based on individual and group research. This course provides students with the skills they require to think independently, make informed decisions, and take appropriate action when faced with personal, social, economic and employment issues.

What will I study and how will I be assessed?		
CONTENT	ASSESSMENT	%
Unit 1: Local and Global Citizenship	External Examination 1 hour	20%
Unit 2: Personal Development	External Examination 1 hour	20%
Unit 3: Employability	External Examination 1 hour	20%
Unit 4: Controlled Assessment Task (Investigation)	Students complete one task from a choice of three. The task is based on investigating a topic in one of the following units: 1. Local and Global Citizenship 2. Personal Development; or 3. Employability	40%

What can this subject lead to?

Whilst there is no A level in this subject, a number of areas relate to other subjects such as Government and Politics (from Citizenship), Health and Social Care (from aspects of personal development) and Business Studies (from Employability). There is a large focus on key transferable skills such as working with others, communication, literacy and use of ICT involved in the subject as well as skills in money management and preparation for the world of work.



MATHEMATICS

Examination Board: CCEA

What is this subject about?

This is a core subject which enables students to use mathematics as a tool for learning across the curriculum. Students will develop the knowledge and skills necessary for the application of concepts in a practical context. They will use their skills of logic and reason to solve problems.

What will I study and how will I be assessed?

CONTENT	ASSESSMENT	%
Unit M3 or Unit M4	Written Examination – 1 paper Calculator Paper: 2 hours	45%
Unit M6 or M7 or M8	Written Examination – 2 papers Non-calculator paper: 1 hour 15 minutes Calculator paper: 1 hour 15 minutes	55%

Each unit contains elements of Number and Algebra, Geometry and Measures and Handling Data.

What can this subject lead to?

This subject is a necessary numeracy qualification for all students. A grade C or above will be an essential requirement for entry to further courses of study and future employment. If a student obtains an A grade in GCSE Mathematics, from modules M4 and M8, they may proceed to study A Level Mathematics. A number of other A Level courses will require a grade B in GCSE Mathematics.



MOVING IMAGE ARTS

(MIA)

Examination Board: CCEA

What is this subject about?

GCSE Moving Image Arts is one of the most exciting and current subjects on the curriculum. Students study the practical and theoretical processes of film making and enjoy experimenting with film making techniques and processes. You will have the opportunity to work on a range of tasks, including planning and creating moving image products.

What will I study and how will I be assessed?

CONTENT	ASSESSMENT	%
Component 1: Critical Understanding of Creative and Technical Moving Image Production	Compulsory online examination 1 hour 30 mins	40%
Component 2: Acquisition of Skills in Moving Image Production	Compulsory controlled assessment tasks	20%
Component 3: Planning and Making a Moving Image Product	Compulsory controlled assessment portfolio: a live-action or animated film.	40%

What can this subject lead to?

This linear course provides a solid foundation for progression to GCE AS/A2 Moving Image Arts, other subject-related qualifications, vocational training and employment within the creative industries.



MUSIC

Examination Board: CCEA

What is this subject about?

GCSE Music is a subject suited to the Student who has a passion for Music, for understanding how it works and an open mind to exploring new styles. It is also a subject that requires students to already have practical experience of Music through performing and reading music notation. Students will continue to develop instrumental or vocal performing skills through their private or EA tutors, striving for a minimum of grade 4. Ensemble skills will be introduced at this stage and students will learn how to perform in a group situation and appraise their work. In the classroom students will learn the theory of music which will ultimately develop their composing and listening skills, allowing them to create and understand how music works. Set pieces drawn across 400 years of musical history gives students a broad overview of Classical and popular musical styles, leading to an appreciation of music and laying the foundation for further study. The study of GCSE Music develops useful skills such as creativity, analysis, confidence, discipline, problem solving and communication.

What will I study and how will I be assessed?

CONTENT	ASSESSMENT	%
Component 1: Performing and Appraising	1 solo, 1 ensemble, viva voce – visiting examiner	35%
Component 2: Composing	Controlled Assessment 2 compositions written over 25 hour time period	30%
Component 3: Listening and Appraising	External Examination 1 hour 30 mins listening paper	35%

What can this subject lead to?

GCSE Music is a pre-requisite for the study of Advanced Level Music. The study of Music strengthens one's ability to listen critically, evaluate, research, appreciate the value of context, analyse, apply technology, compose, present and perform. All these skills are transferable to many careers not specifically related to Music (for example, research based careers and administration). Specific music related careers include performing, composing, arranging, arts administration, concert hall management, promotion of the arts, recording industry, music therapy, classroom teaching, peripatetic teaching, television and radio presenting and researching.



PHYSICAL EDUCATION

Examination Board: CCEA

What is this subject about?

GCSE PE is aimed at both students who are keen to discover the benefits of leading a balanced healthy lifestyle and also those who wish to develop peak physical performance in their chosen sports. There are plenty of opportunities to perform practically throughout the course and students are encouraged to try new sports and activities as well as to monitor their own lifestyle profile. Students have an opportunity to coach and officiate in addition to taking part in a 2 day Orienteering Course at Gosford Forest Park in June of Year 11

What will I study and how will I be assessed?

CONTENT	ASSESSMENT	%
Component 1: Factors Underpinning Health and Performance	External Examination 1 hour 15 mins	25%
Component 2: Developing Performance	External Examination 1 hour 15 mins	25%
Component 3: Individual performances in Physical Activities and Sports	Students perform three physical activities or sports from the list provided by CCEA	50%

What can this subject lead to?

GCSE PE opens doors in a variety of areas. The natural progression may be to study PE at A Level and a number of students follow university courses in Sport Science, Physical Education and similar disciplines. PE students have also followed careers in the Health Sciences, Education and Management whilst others have specialised in areas such as Sports' Psychology, Strength and Conditioning and Sports' Therapy.



PHYSICS

Examination Board: CCEA

What is this subject about?

From the smallest parts of the human body to the great clusters of galaxies, Physics helps us understand how our universe works. A typical Physics student is confident both numerically and practically and loves to get to grips with how things work. This GCSE course encourages students to develop their curiosity about the physical world and provides insight into and experience of how science works. So, if you have an enquiring mind, enjoy a challenge and like solving problems, studying Physics can give you the best chance of success.

What will I study and how will I be assessed?

CONTENT	ASSESSMENT	%
Unit 1: Motion, Forces, Moments, Energy, Density, Kinetic Theory, Radioactivity, Nuclear Fission and Fusion	External Examination	37.5%
Unit 2: Waves, Light, Electricity, Magnetism and Electromagnetism and Space Physics	External Examination	37.5%
Unit 3: Practical Skills	Practical Assessment task (in class)	7.5%
	Practical Applications Written Examination	17.5%

What can this subject lead to?

The career opportunities using Physics are almost infinite. You might want to pursue a career in science, the media, education, business or a host of other fields and Physics can help give you the edge by providing a good initial training. Physics students pursue academic and industrial research, working in Physics-based industries such as electronics, alternative energy development or communications, and the critical and growing area of Medical Physics.



RELIGIOUS STUDIES

Examination Board: CCEA

What is this subject about?

Religious Studies explores key events in the life of Jesus and examines their implications for today. It covers beliefs and practices within the Christian Church. Students will consider a range of important ethical issues including euthanasia, capital punishment, bioethics, war and peace and abortion. Religious Studies enables students to get a broad look at how religion and spirituality impact on the world we live in. It helps students develop marketable skills and aptitudes including analytical and strategic thinking, the ability to work with abstract ideas and problem-solving skills. Student learning in the subject has been greatly enhanced through study trips to Auschwitz and Rome.

What will I study and how will I be assessed?

CONTENT	ASSESSMENT	%
Unit 3: The Revelation of God and the Christian Church	External Examination 1 hour 30 mins	50%
Unit 6: An Introduction to Christian Ethics	External Examination 1 hour 30 mins	50%

What can this subject lead to?

Religious Studies is an excellent preparation for a wide range of university courses. It develops the skills to analyse and assess arguments, and to reflect, discuss and debate the fundamental issues (i.e. 'the big questions'). The skills learnt are essential for any future education or employment. The application of philosophical and ethical ideas to practical moral issues (like abortion, euthanasia or holy war) can be especially relevant for those considering careers in law, the media, business and teaching or medicine.



SINGLE AWARD SCIENCE

Examination Board: CCEA

What is this subject about?

Single Award Science can be taken instead of one of the separate sciences (Biology, Chemistry or Physics). The course incorporates some aspects of Biology, Chemistry and Physics with particular emphasis on applying Science to the world around us. It does not cover some of the more demanding areas from the separate Science specifications and involves less Mathematics than those courses. Single Award Science is for students who do not wish to specialise in one particular area of Science, have limited interest in Science and who do not see themselves taking on any of the separate Science subjects at A Level. It therefore allows students to fulfil the requirement to study one Science subject at GCSE and to meet the criteria of universities that ask for a GCSE in Science, while also leaving students with more options for studying different areas of the curriculum. It does allow progression to Life and Health Sciences at A Level as long as all GCSE Single Award Science units are taken at Higher Tier.

What will I study and how will I be assessed?

CONTENT	ASSESSMENT	%
Unit 1: Biology	External Examination 1 hour	25%
Unit 2: Chemistry	External Examination 1 hour	25%
Unit 3: Physics	External Examination 1 hour	25%
Unit 4: Practical Skills	Booklet A (7.5%) Two externally marked pre-release practicals in Year 12 Booklet B (17.5%) External written examination on practical work. 1 hour 15 mins	25%

What can this subject lead to?

This GCSE is intended for breadth of study rather than depth. It provides useful skills for general A Level study such as working with data, problem solving, investigating methods and drawing conclusions. It does not adequately prepare for the study of Biology, Chemistry or Physics at A Level, however, Single Award Science students may continue studying Science to A Level by selecting the new Life & Health Sciences course.



SPANISH

Examination Board: CCEA

What is this subject about?

This is a course for students who want to make real progress in communicating in and understanding Spanish. It will help students discover interesting and unusual aspects of Spanish-speaking countries and cultures. There is the possibility of visiting a Spanish-speaking country and enjoying other language-related trips. This fast-moving course will challenge your individual ability, improve your memory, literacy, team-working and research skills and give you strategies to work out new and unknown language in a variety of contexts.

Students may choose a Modern Language GCSE which they have previously studied to a suitable level. However, where this is not the case, interested students should contact the Head of Department to discuss options. It is also possible to choose more than one language.

What will I study and how will I be assessed?

CONTENT	ASSESSMENT	%
Unit 1: Listening	External Examination	25%
Unit 2: Speaking	One teacher facilitated and externally marked speaking examination	25%
Unit 3: Reading	External Examination	25%
Unit 4: Writing	External Examination	25%

What can this subject lead to?

The global Spanish-speaking population is enormous and rapidly expanding, meaning that employers need Spanish speakers and are more likely to promote and employ those with language skills. This applies to a wide range of jobs across the globe. As well as the possibility of studying Spanish at A Level, you may choose to study Spanish or a new language at university; GCSE is the first step. The ability to communicate in Spanish will also open the door to a world of future travel opportunities and new experiences, making you more confident and independent.



TECHNOLOGY AND DESIGN

Examination Board: CCEA

What is this subject about?

GCSE Technology and Design is a course that focuses on design and problem-solving, with an emphasis on mechanical, electrical, and pneumatic systems. The subject incorporates computer and 3D modelling, allowing students to develop their skills in product design and manufacturing. Throughout the course, students will conduct investigations and develop designs that lead to the production of a working prototype. The subject equally emphasises both product design and systems, providing a comprehensive understanding of technology and design principles.

What will I study and how will I be assessed?

CONTENT	ASSESSMENT	%
Unit 1: Technology and Design Core Content	External Examination	25%
Unit 2: Optional Areas of Study	External Examination	25%
Unit 3: Design and Manufacturing Project Students complete a design project comprising a design portfolio and an associated manufacturing task.	Controlled Assessment	50%

What can this subject lead to?

Studying Technology and Design at GCSE level opens up a world of exciting opportunities in various fields. This course equips students with valuable skills and knowledge in electrical/electronic engineering, mechanical engineering, product and graphic design, structural and civil engineering, software engineering, web design, construction, architecture, automotive engineering and design, manufacturing, industrial design, material engineering, fabrication of materials including welding and construction, and the aerospace industry. With such a diverse range of subjects and skills, this course can lead to a wide array of employment opportunities in the dynamic world of technology and design.

ADMISSIONS CRITERIA

Portadown College

Killicomaine Road

Portadown

CRAIGAVON

BT63 5BU

Telephone: (028) 3833 2439

Fax: (028) 3835 0733

Email: info@pc.portadown.ni.sch.uk

Web-site: www.portadowncollege.com

Principal: Miss G R Gibb, BA (Hons), MSc, PGCE, PQH (NI)

Chairman of the Board of Governors: Mr P H Aiken, BA (Hons), DMS, CFCIPD

Controlled Senior High School (Grammar)

Age Range: 14-18

Admissions No: 220

Enrolment No: 780

OPEN NIGHT 2025

7:00 – 9:00pm on Thursday 16 January 2025.

RESPECTIVE FUNCTIONS OF THE BOARD OF GOVERNORS AND PRINCIPAL IN RELATION TO ADMISSION TO THE SCHOOL

The Board of Governors draws up the admissions criteria and delegates to a Transfer Subcommittee, which includes the Principal, the responsibility for applying these criteria. Any reference herein to the term Board of Governors includes any Committee or Subcommittee appointed by the Board of Governors for the purposes of applying the Admission Criteria set out herein.

ADMISSIONS POLICY

Portadown College will consider for admission those students who, in the judgement of the Board of Governors, are suited to and will benefit from the courses and form of education on offer in the College.

The lodging of an application for a place at Portadown College is interpreted by the Board of Governors as an indication that parents/guardians and the student concerned accept and are in agreement with the ethos, philosophy, aims, policies, rules and regulations of the College including any code of conduct or behaviour management policy of the College. Information in relation to this may be obtained from the College.

The lodging of an application for a place at Portadown College is interpreted by the Board of Governors that parents/guardians consent to the College receiving, storing and processing data for the purposes of admission.

Children resident in Northern Ireland at the time of their proposed admission will be selected for admission to the School before any child not so resident.

When considering which students should be selected for admission, the Board of Governors will only take into account information which is detailed on, or attached to, the application form alongside the provision of relevant information as indicated below. Parents/guardians should therefore ensure that all information pertaining to their young person and relevant to the College's admissions criteria is uploaded to the EA Junior to Senior High Application Portal by the date and time specified.

DUTY TO VERIFY

The Board of Governors reserves the right to require such supplementary evidence as it may determine to support or verify information on any application/transfer form.

The provision of false or incorrect information or the failure to provide verifying documents by the required deadlines may result in either the withdrawal of a place or the inability of the College to offer a place.

CRITERIA FOR ADMISSION TO YEAR 11 AT THE BEGINNING OF THE 2025/2026 SCHOOL YEAR

Priority will be given to applications stating Portadown College as 1st preference.

The number of places to be made available for each of the Contributory Junior High Schools will be based on the academic attainment of the students from each school who have applied for

admission to Portadown College. The 2025 allocation will have regard to the allocation of places in Year 11 in previous years and historical performance data.

Please see information below (Table 1) on how to access the EA Junior to Senior High Application Portal and key dates for September 2025 admissions (<https://www.eani.org.uk/parents/admissions/admission-to-senior-high-schools-age-14>):

Table (1)

IMPORTANT DATES - 2025	
Monday 7 April 2025 (12 noon)	Junior to Senior High application process opens with online portal available (from 12 noon) for applicants to apply for Year 10 admission.
Friday 2 May 2025 (4pm)	Online portal closes at 4pm for Junior to Senior High applications. Note: The online portal will not be accessible for JHS-SHS applications after this date/time. On or before this date, Junior High Schools transfer pupil rank order data to Senior High Schools.

A. Contributory Junior High Schools

The Contributory Junior High Schools to Portadown College are: Clounagh Junior High School, Killicomaine Junior High School and Tandragee Junior High School.

Notwithstanding the information contained below in Section B, in the event of there being more applications on behalf of students attending any one particular Contributory Junior High School than places available for students from that school, the Board of Governors will select students on the basis of the overall Transfer score and rank order (highest to lowest).

- (i) This selection will be based on the rank order of academic evidence provided to Portadown College in the form of the Transfer score.
- (ii) In a contingency situation, the rank order of academic evidence provided for the student(s) affected by the contributory schools will be taken from their continuous assessment and/or standardised data.

The rank order of academic evidence recorded on the required proforma must be provided to the College by the Contributory Junior High School no later than 4.00 pm on Friday 2 May 2025.

B. Schools other than Contributory Junior High Schools

Up to 10 places are available to students attending schools other than the Contributory Junior High Schools (NB: the Contributory Junior High Schools are: Clounagh Junior High School, Killicomaine Junior High School and Tandragee Junior High School).

The Board of Governors will select students on the basis of an assessment of evidence made available to it of previous academic attainment and suitability of the education on offer at Portadown College.

The evidence of previous academic attainment must include the most recent report provided by the student's transferring school and should also include standardised test results for Key Stage 3 or its equivalent.

Students will be selected on the basis of a rank order (highest to lowest) established through inspection of the academic evidence provided.

Evidence of academic attainment of students not attending one of the Contributory Junior High Schools must be uploaded to the EA Junior to Senior High Application Portal no later than 4.00 pm on Friday 2 May 2025.

It is incumbent on parents/guardians to ensure that this academic evidence is uploaded to the EA Junior to Senior High Application Portal within the timescales stated in Table 1.

Table (2)
SPECIAL CONSIDERATION

APPLICATIONS AND ADMISSIONS TO YEAR 11			
Year	Admissions No	Number of Applications	Total Admission (inc. SEN applicants)
2022/2023	220	296	228
2023/2024	220	244	221
2024/2025	220	255	222

Special Consideration will be given to students whose normal progress has been adversely affected by medical or other problems which have impacted on their academic performance.

Parents/guardians who wish to make a request for Special Consideration must upload Form ASC (Application for Special Consideration) to the EA Junior to Senior High Application Portal, with accompanying documentary evidence attached, no later than **4.00pm on Friday 2 May 2025**. It is the responsibility of parents/guardians to select the appropriate box when applying via the Portal to declare a request for Special Consideration. Form ASC must be verified by the student's transferring school Principal. Form ASC is available to download from the Portadown College website or may be obtained upon request made to the College.

In the event of not being able to separate applicant students down to the last available place the Admissions Sub-Criteria listed below will apply in the order given.

ADMISSIONS SUB-CRITERIA

Should there be more applications at any time than places available the following sub-criteria will be applied to identify the students to be admitted in the following order:

1. Sibling in attendance at Portadown College.
2. Children who, at the time of application, are the eldest child of the family eligible to apply.
3. Sibling previously attended Portadown College.
- 4.i. Initial letter of surname (as entered on birth certificate) in the order set out below:
E O' M Y K T S L Mac Z Q O G N A Mc I H F V P R W D B C U J X
- 4.ii. In the event of surnames beginning with the same initial letter, the subsequent letters of the surname will be used in the order set out below:
I S L D B R U J X E Q G N C F H Z O V P A M Y K W T
- 4.iii. In the event of two identical surnames, the alphabetical order of the letters of the forenames (as entered on birth certificate) will be used.
5. If applicants are still tied after this then priority will be determined amongst them by a method of computerised random selection capable of leaving a clear audit trail.

WAITING LIST POLICY

The College does not operate a Waiting List Policy.

CRITERIA FOR ADMISSION DURING THE COURSE OF YEAR 11 AND AT THE BEGINNING OF OR DURING YEAR 12

Consideration can only be given where places are available at the time of application.

Given that GCSE courses are of two years' duration, applications for admission to Year 12 will only be considered if the courses taken by the applicant in his/her previous school are compatible with those on offer in Portadown College.

CRITERIA FOR ADMISSION AFTER GCSE (16+)

Students wishing to transfer to Portadown College for Sixth Form Courses should contact the Principal. Interested students are invited to the Open Night on Thursday 16 January 2025.

Students wishing to register their interest in Sixth Form should contact the College Office (Tel: 028 38332439 or email: info@pc.portadown.ni.sch.uk) by Friday 20 June 2025.

Admission will be based on:

- (a) Evidence of academic attainment based on externally validated examinations. A minimum of 3 Grade B and 5 Grade C*/C GCSE passes are required (“the Minimum Academic Criteria”).
or 12 points (i.e. based on GCSE grades, or their numerical equivalences, where A* = 4 points, A = 3 points, B = 2 points, C* = 1.5 points, C = 1 point) in a minimum of seven GCSE subjects are required (“the Minimum Academic Criteria”).
- (b) Meeting the subject specific entry requirements for a minimum of three subjects.
- (c) Availability of places in chosen subjects or courses.

The admissions criteria for admission after GCSE will be applied by the Principal on behalf of the Board of Governors.

Students who are currently attending the College and who have attained the Minimum Academic Criteria will be offered places in preference to students from other schools.

Students from other schools who meet the minimum criteria will be offered places on the basis of rank order of achievement in descending order based on total points (i.e. based on GCSE grades, or their numerical equivalences, where A* = 4 points, A = 3 points, B = 2 points, C* = 1.5 points, C = 1 point) and their entry is subject to places being available and/or the Principal requesting additional places from DENI with the support of the Education Authority.

Applications from students with qualifications other than GCSE will be assessed on the basis of GCSE equivalence where possible.

Portadown College criteria for any extra places made available by the Department of Education for admission into Year 13 (Sixth Form)

The Department of Education may, on request, increase the number of students that the College can admit to its Year 13. Places that become available in this way shall be allocated only to students who meet the basic eligibility criteria to be applied in the order set down.

1. Students who have most recently completed Year 12 in Portadown College.
2. Students from other schools where admission to an extra place at Portadown College has been agreed by the Department of Education.*

*Parents/guardians should note how the Department of Education (DE) will, in response to a school’s request, increase the school’s enrolment number in order to allow an extra post-16 student to enrol. DE will first check whether there is another school or schools of a type suitable for that student within an hour’s journey of where the student lives. If there is, DE will then check whether this other school or schools with places available may provide all of the post-16 courses that the student wishes to pursue. If these checks find that no other suitable school may provide all of the post-16 courses that the student wishes to pursue – then DE will agree a school’s request for an extra place.

What is a school of a type that is suitable for a student? To determine this, DE first considers all schools to be one of 4 types: (i) Denominational (ii) Non-denominational (iii) Integrated and (iv) Irish-Medium. A school requesting an extra place for a post-16 student will belong to one of these 4 types and DE will consider any other school or schools from this type as suitable for the student. DE will also consider as suitable for the students any school from the same type as the type of school that the student attended in Year 12.

Force Majeure

In appropriate circumstances, the College will give due consideration to any circumstances which it feels qualifies for force majeure.



Portadown College
Killicomaine Road
Portadown BT63 5BU

T: 028 38332439

F: 028 38350733

E: info@pc.portadown.ni.sch.uk

www.portadowncollege.com

INVESTORS IN PEOPLE®
We invest in people Standard