



HOWELL'S SENIOR SCHOOL
Llandaff

G D S T



HOWELL'S CO-ED COLLEGE
Llandaff

N U R T U R I N G E X C E L L E N C E

YEAR 11 OPTIONS CHOICES – FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Q: Why does Howell's offer a mixture of WJEC and English Examination Boards at A level?

A: Both the Welsh AS coupled and English linear systems have advantages and disadvantages and, in addition, both the required content and style of examinations varies between examination boards. Allowing Heads of Departments the freedom to select from qualifications from either system means they can choose the examination system and content specification that best suits each individual subject.

Q: If I don't take an A level in a certain subject will it hold me back if I want to study that subject at university?

A: No, in fact for many courses like Medicine, Law, Psychology or Engineering, you do not have to take an A level in these disciplines to study them at a higher level. At Howell's Co-Ed College (HCC) we offer a range of subjects that, in selected combinations, meet the entry requirements of the most selective university courses and our students have successfully secured places on them over the years.

Q: I am interested in Law, Psychology, Sociology or Criminology but don't want to do the A level, are there any super-curricular courses I could take?

A: We would urge you to explore the rich super-curricular offer that HCC makes alongside the academic and pastoral support, to help you fulfil your potential. Many of our College students undertake Extended Project Qualifications (EPQ) allowing them to achieve a Level 3 qualification (equivalent to half an A level) through independently researching a topic of their choice. In our experience, Universities and employers highly value the 'extra' stretch and challenge students commit to by expanding beyond their set curriculum to independently study topics that they are passionate about.

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Q: I am not sure what I want to do, what sort of advice is available?

A: If you need advice choosing your A level subjects, you can book an appointment with Mrs Thelwell who has responsibility for careers in the Senior School. If your parent/carer wishes to accompany you, Mrs Thelwell is available for a Teams meeting. We would also encourage you to visit the Academic – Curriculum area of the HCC website www.howellscoedcollege.gdst.net. If you would like advice relating to highly competitive university courses such as Dentistry, Medicine and Veterinary or those at Oxford and Cambridge, then you can also speak to Dr Lewis, our Medics, Vets and Dentists Co-ordinator and/or Mrs Harrison-Hughes, our Oxbridge Co-ordinator.

Q: Alongside my subject teachers, who else will support me with my aspirations?

Personal Tutors – Responsible for the day to day pastoral care of a small group of students. They meet with the tutor group weekly and with individual tutees in half termly 1-2-1 meetings to monitor progress and offer individual advice and support on curricular and super-curricular courses, and university applications. Personal Tutors deliver a structured programme including study skills, careers education, and awareness raising on topical issues.

Learning Mentors – Provided for a variety of reasons to students who would benefit from additional support, for example with organisation, managing their workload, or study skills. Students may only need a mentor for a short period of time to get on track, some may need longer. We are flexible and work with each student to make sure that their individual needs are met. Occasionally, a student may recognise they have a weakness that they want to address and ask for some specific support.

Subject Support Teachers – Small groups of students identified as needing academic support may be timetabled for additional subject-specific support sessions.

Careers and Higher Education Team – Mrs Wilks (College Careers Adviser, Gap-Year and Overage Specialist), Mrs Harrison-Hughes (Director of Academic Development and Oxbridge Applications Co-ordinator), Dr Lewis (Dentists, Medics and Vets Co-ordinator) plus Subject Link Tutors. Together, this team provide bespoke, tailored, flexible expert support throughout the year and are a gateway to our network of careers and world of work contacts; connecting students with relevant professionals and alumni in roles they are aspiring to achieve. Support continues when students leave HCC and Mrs Wilks has successfully supported students through both gap year and graduate entry applications for Harvard, Medicine and beyond.

Wellbeing Team – Nurse Kelly and Graeme offer a listening ear, professional guidance and care to students who may need their unique provision and skills. Students can self-refer to the Team and/or they may be encouraged to access this support via their Personal Tutor.

GDST RUNGWAY – Mentoring for every sixth former - Every College student can connect with the GDST alumni family, through the 'Rungway' mentoring app – so now, at the touch of a button, our students have a way of asking some of the burning questions they have about study and life after school, anywhere and at any time.

GDST Life – provides a forum for College students to engage with all the GDST schools.

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Q: Do you offer mock interviews?

A: Absolutely! Mock interviews are available to all college students who can expect to be interviewed as part of a university, apprenticeship, or employment application. Our College Careers Adviser, Mrs Wilks, has a wealth of expertise to draw on to provide realistic mock interviews and constructive feedback as well as a large network of potential interviewers from a wide range of subject and career specialisms. In addition, our team of Oxbridge Subject Link Tutors provide challenging subject-specific academic interviews in the 'tutorial/supervision' style used at these universities. This is complemented with mock interviews with alumni who are currently studying, or have recently graduated from Oxford, Cambridge or Russell Group Universities, as well as practising professionals who form part of the wider Howell's community. For students applying for Dentistry, Medicine and Veterinary courses, our Medics Co-ordinator, Dr Lewis, provides mock interviews tailored to each university's individual style, drawing on her own experiences as an interviewer at UCL. Many universities use MMI (Multiple Mini Interviews), and so we also offer several mock MMI sessions throughout the Autumn Term. Weekly interview preparation sessions throughout Year 13 with Dr Lewis ensure students have relevant and up-to-date knowledge to approach healthcare-specific interviews.

Q: How do you prepare students for additional admissions assessment such as the BioMedical Admissions Test (BMAT) or the English Literature Admissions Test (ELAT)?

A: Many highly competitive courses ask students to complete pre-interview admissions tests or assessments. Our experienced team of Oxbridge Link Tutors provide support to students sitting these assessments including Dr Lewis who advises students on preparing for both the BMAT and University Clinical Aptitude Test (UCAT) and provides weekly small group support sessions for those taking BMAT. Mr Smith supports students taking Sixth Term Examination Paper (STEP) and Test of Mathematics for University Admission (TMUA) mathematics examinations in addition to the Mathematics Admissions Test (MAT). All students at HCC can attend preparation courses organised by the GDST covering a range of admissions assessments. You are entitled to receive a discount on places on BMAT and UCAT courses run by the MedicPortal and held at HCC. In addition, HCC is a registered test centre for the paper-based assessments taken in October Half Term of Year 13 and so our students take the tests in familiar surroundings.



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