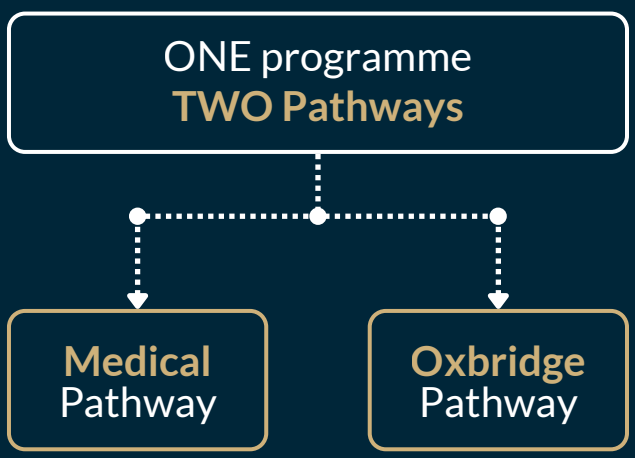
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THE GATEWAY PROGRAMME



Typically, more than half of student applicants secure admission to prestigious Russell Group universities.

WELCOME



At Lymm Sixth Form, we have a long-standing tradition of supporting high-achieving students. Established in 2014, the Gateway Programme is designed to motivate and guide our most capable learners as they prepare applications to leading universities across the UK. While the Gateway Programme welcomes any student with the ambition to join, it particularly encourages applications from those aspiring to study at Oxbridge, Durham, Bath, Warwick or pursue highly competitive fields such as Economics, Law, Engineering, Medicine, Veterinary Science, Dentistry and more. Typically, students will have achieved a strong GCSE profile, including a minimum of five grades at 8 or 9.

We recognise that outstanding academic results alone are not enough to secure a place at top universities. The Gateway Programme provides tailored support offering two distinct pathways; medical pathway and Oxbridge pathways. These both include tutorial-style sessions and personalised feedback on course and university choices. They both include, tutorials and engagement with super-curricular activities, students are encouraged to extend their intellectual curiosity and think critically both within and beyond their subjects. Throughout Year 12, students are encouraged to take advantage of the many opportunities available to enhance not only their academic profile but also their confidence in public speaking, their ability to articulate ideas clearly, and their skill in constructing and defending arguments verbally. These experiences are vital in developing the intellectual agility and communication skills that top universities seek.

From the early stages of course exploration through to the submission of applications, interview preparation, and examination support, our dedicated staff provide unwavering guidance at every step. We are deeply committed to ensuring that each student feels fully supported and equipped to realise their potential and succeed in the highly competitive university admissions process.

Ultimately, the Gateway Programme aims to cultivate not only academic excellence but also the confidence, independence, and intellectual resilience required to thrive in the demanding environment of Oxbridge and Medical pathways.

Mrs N Neesam
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WHAT IS THE GATEWAY PROGRAMME

The Gateway Programme was set up in 2014 to inspire and support our most able students to win places at the country's best universities. We know that excellent grades are only one part of a successful application. Universities also look for curiosity, independent thinking and a genuine love of a subject.

The programme has two aims:

Super-curricular opportunities for all Gateway students. We give students access to subject-specific activities, tutorials and opportunities beyond the A level syllabus, from the very start of Year 12. These develop thinking skills and deepen subject interest.

Specialist support for Oxbridge and medical, veterinary and dentistry applicants. For students aiming at Oxford, Cambridge, Medicine, Veterinary Science or Dentistry, we offer a personalised package. This includes university visits, talks from current students and graduates, and preparation for the interview and thinking skills these courses demand.







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Who is it for?

The programme is open to any student who wishes to join. We strongly encourage students who:

- are working towards A/A* grades at A level, with a GCSE profile that includes at least five grades at 8 or 9
- are considering Oxford or Cambridge
- are interested in competitive courses such as Medicine, Dentistry, Veterinary Science or Law
- want to aim for top courses at other leading universities, or for highly competitive degree apprenticeships

A student's GCSE profile is reviewed alongside their aspirations, so we can tailor our guidance.

A strong track record.

Recent Gateway students have gone on to study Engineering, Mathematics and Modern Languages at Cambridge, Medicine at Newcastle, Keele and Liverpool, Natural Sciences and Biochemistry at Durham, Mathematics at Bath and Warwick, and Chemical Engineering at Imperial. And many more. Others have secured top degree apprenticeships, such as with Barclays, Rolls-Royce, Pinsent Masons, Grant Thornton, Laing O'Rourke, BBC, JN Bentley and more.



Results Day

WHAT IS THE GATEWAY PROGRAMME

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The Gateway Programme has two distinct but complementary pathways: the **Medical Pathway** and the **Oxbridge Pathway**.

Both provide ambitious, structured support for high-achieving students, helping them progress from initial aspiration to a competitive university application.

Both pathways offer **five progressive stages of support**, with clear milestones, targeted intervention and opportunities to demonstrate readiness at each stage.

An IAG in Year 12, is delivered to parents/careers of Gateway students, to explain the demands, timeline and the support available.

The two pathways share a common foundation in academic excellence, independent learning and application preparation, before moving into specialist support tailored to each route.

Membership of the Gateway Programme, involves the following stages:

Stage 1: Aspire (Year 12)

- Discover potential and establish ambition
- Introduce students to the demands of competitive university applications. Identify academic strengths, aspirations, current attainment and individual development needs.
- Sixth-form support: Initial assessment, academic mentoring, university information sessions and an individual Gateway development plan.

Stage 2: Explore (Year 12)

Develop subject knowledge and intellectual curiosity

- Students are encouraged to explore beyond the A-level curriculum and understand what makes a strong candidate for their chosen pathway.

Sixth-form support: Super-curricular reading, lectures, research tasks, subject societies, visiting speakers and guided reflection.

Stage 3: Enrich (Year 12)

- Build relevant experience and demonstrate readiness
- Help students develop the practical skills, subject engagement and evidence of commitment needed to support a competitive application.
- Sixth-form support: Work experience or relevant exposure, academic projects, competitions, essay or problem-solving challenges, and structured reflection.

Stage 4: Prepare (Year 12)

- Develop a strong, targeted university application
- Translate academic achievement, subject engagement and personal development into a well-evidenced application.
- Sixth-form support: Admissions test preparation, application and personal statement guidance, academic references, university choice advice and specialist mentoring.

Stage 5: Perform (Year 13)

- Prepare for selection and secure the next step
- Build confidence and competence in interviews, assessments and final application decisions, with ongoing academic support.
- Sixth-form support: Mock interviews, timed assessments, individual feedback, offer-holder guidance and continued support towards meeting offer conditions.

WHAT IS THE GATEWAY PROGRAMME
MEDICAL PATHWAY

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one programme
TWO pathways

A → Medical Pathway

B → Oxbridge Pathway

Medical Pathway

This aims to support students to prepare for competitive applications to Medicine, Dentistry and Veterinary Science developing academic excellence, insight into the profession, ethical reasoning and an informed understanding of patient care.

Target group: aspiring medical applicants, with early identification of students interested in medicine.

	Specialist Lymm Sixth Form Support	Evidence of progress
1. Aspire	Medical careers briefings, entry requirement reviews, academic target-setting and introduction to the realities of medicine.	Individual medical pathway plan and realistic academic targets.
2. Explore	Medical science enrichment, clinical case discussions, medical ethics, healthcare lectures and wider reading.	Reading log and reflections on medical issues.
3. Enrich	Appropriate clinical or healthcare exposure, volunteering, caring experiences, research opportunities and reflection on communication, empathy and teamwork.	Reflective portfolio demonstrating insight, not simply hours completed.
4. Prepare	Support with UCAT preparation, medical school selection, application writing, admissions timeline management and practice communicating motivation for medicine.	Diagnostic and progress test results, application review and completed submission checklist.
5. Perform	Multiple mock mini-interview (MMI) practice, ethical scenarios, role-play, data interpretation and mock panel interviews.	Individual interview feedback, action plan and offer-condition support.

What will make this pathway distinctive?

- A named medical admissions lead and access to relevant subject mentors.
- Support with UCAT preparation.
- Access to a bank of ethical dilemmas, clinical scenarios and interview questions.
- Support with securing partnerships with healthcare professionals, universities and appropriate work-experience providers.
- Explicit teaching of reflection: what students learned from an experience, why it matters and how it informs their understanding of medicine.
- 1-2-1 (and group) mock interviews and feedback.

WHAT IS THE GATEWAY PROGRAMME
OXBRIDGE PATHWAY

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one programme
TWO pathways

A → Medical Pathway

B → Oxbridge Pathway

Oxbridge Pathway

This aims to support students to prepare for the distinctive demands of undergraduate study at Oxford or Cambridge, irrespective of their chosen subject.

Target group: Students who have demonstrated strong academic potential, intellectual curiosity and readiness to engage with challenging subject-specific material.

	Specialist Lymm Sixth Form Support	Evidence of progress
1. Aspire	Oxford and Cambridge admissions briefings, subject and course exploration, academic target-setting and university application planning.	Personal academic development plan and initial course shortlist.
2. Explore	Super-curricular reading, academic lectures, university outreach, subject-specific research and discussion groups.	Reading journal, research questions and evidence of independent engagement.
3. Enrich	Support with accessing extension classes, Olympiads or subject competitions, essay prizes, independent projects, advanced problem-solving and academic presentations.	Extended academic work and evidence of intellectual development.
4. Prepare	Support with course-specific admissions tests, written work where required, application and personal statement support, and subject-focused tutorials.	Timed practice results, reviewed written work and application readiness assessment.
5. Perform	Subject-specific mock interviews, unseen problem-solving, critical discussion, tutorial-style teaching and detailed feedback.	Interview feedback, demonstrated responsiveness to new ideas and a final application review.

What will make this pathway distinctive?

- Small-group academic tutorials modelled on university teaching to support practice explaining reasoning aloud, responding to unfamiliar problems and learning from mistakes.
- Subject specialists leading challenging discussions and extension sessions.
- Support with accessing super-curricular programme.
- Individualised support for the particular course, including relevant admissions tests and written work.
- Support with practice interviews arranged to support students as academic conversations designed to explore how candidates think and engage with unfamiliar material. This should be central to the pathway rather than treating interview preparation as a last-minute activity.

WHAT DOES "SUPER-CURRICULAR" MEAN?

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Super-curricular activities are education beyond the classroom. They take a student deeper into a subject than the A level syllabus goes. They show universities and employers genuine, self-driven interest.

	Super-curricular	Extra-curricular
What it is	Academic exploration linked to a subject or career	Wider interests and hobbies
Examples	Reading around a subject, lectures, online courses, essay prizes, olympiads, the EPQ, research projects, relevant work experience	Sport, music, drama, Duke of Edinburgh, part-time jobs, volunteering
Why it matters	Shows academic passion and readiness for a degree	Shows character, teamwork and commitment

Both are valuable. For competitive university courses, however, admissions tutors give most weight to super-curricular activity. They want evidence that a student loves their subject enough to explore it in their own time.



Quality beats quantity.

A long list of activities is not the aim. What impresses is what a student learned, how it changed their thinking, and what they did next because of it. One book that led to an online course, which led to an EPQ, tells a much stronger story than ten unconnected certificates.

SUPER-CURRICULAR IDEAS

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Students should pick a mix that fits their interests, and build depth over time.

Type	Examples	Good for
Reading and listening	Oxford and Cambridge suggested reading lists; quality journalism; subject magazines and journals; podcasts	Every student; the foundation of everything else
Lectures and talks	Gresham College free lectures; University of Manchester open lectures; Daresbury Laboratory Talking Science; talks in school	Discovering new topics cheaply and quickly
Online courses	FutureLearn and edX free university courses; Unifrog MOOCs; Cambridge and Oxford online resources	Testing an interest before committing
Essay prizes	Trinity College Cambridge essay prizes; Peterhouse (Vellacott) essay prizes; Caius Explore; John Locke Institute; other college prizes (search "[subject] essay prize sixth form")	Showing independent thinking and writing; most close in spring or summer
Olympiads and challenges	British Biology Olympiad; UK Chemistry Olympiad; British Physics Olympiad; UKMT Senior Maths Challenge; UK Linguistics Olympiad; Chemistry Race	Problem-solving under pressure; ask your subject teacher, as the school registers entrants
Projects and research	Extended Project Qualification (EPQ); CREST Awards; EDT Engineering Education Scheme	Sustained independent work; often the strongest item in an application
Access and mentoring programmes	HE+; OxNet; Pelican Programme; STEM SMART; Lucy Cavendish programme; Isaac Science physics mentoring; In2Science UK; Sutton Trust	Sustained stretch, with university contact
Summer schools and residentials	UNIQ (Oxford); Sutton Trust summer schools; Cambridge shadowing schemes; Villiers Park	A real taste of university life; most applications open January to March
Work experience	Speakers for Schools placements; Springpod virtual work experience (NHS, Barclays, Airbus); Forage job simulations; local placements	Testing a career; essential for Medicine, Dentistry and Veterinary courses; valuable for apprenticeships
Societies and clubs	School astronomy, engineering, debating, medic and animal conservation societies; starting a new society; Young Engineers membership	Leadership and sustained commitment

The EPQ deserves a special mention. It is an independent project on a topic the student chooses: a 5,000-word dissertation, or an artefact with a written report. It is worth half an A level, with up to 28 UCAS points at A*. It works best when the topic links closely to the course or career a student is aiming for. For Oxbridge, the depth of thinking matters more than the grade. Some Russell Group universities make lower offers for a good EPQ grade, so check individual course requirements.

OPPORTUNITIES

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Several of the most valuable programmes are available at the start of Year 12. Students are encouraged to speak with a teacher or Sixth Form team member for support with their application.

Opportunity	What it is	Who it suits
Lucy Cavendish College (Cambridge) Academic Attainment Programme	Free supplementary academic support for around 1,000 high-achieving state school students; the college reports it almost doubles participants' chances of an Oxbridge offer	High-achieving state school students considering Oxbridge
OxNet	Academic access programme led by Pembroke College, Oxford: English, Humanities, Languages, Philosophy & World Religions, Science, Social Science	Year 12 state school students in the North West
UK Chemistry Olympiad	National chemistry competition	Chemistry students; Dr Dodds promotes this every year
Pelican Programme (Corpus Christi College, Cambridge)	Six-month programme of fortnightly online small-group seminars with subject experts, plus admissions sessions	Year 12 at a UK state school, on course for A*AA or above, meeting at least one widening-participation criterion
STEM SMART (Cambridge with Isaac Science)	Free tuition and support in maths and science	Students considering Engineering, Computer Science, Physical or Biological Sciences who meet widening-participation criteria
HE+ (Cambridge)	Super-curricular resources and a programme of support from December to August 2027; last year included a free residential at Sidney Sussex College	Open to almost anyone interested in stretching themselves
Gresham College lectures	Free public lectures, online or in person, on a huge range of subjects	Everyone
John Locke Institute Essay Prize	Essays of up to 2,000 words across philosophy, politics, economics, history, psychology, theology, law and more	Humanities and social science students

WHY THIS MATTERS

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Route	How super-curricular activity helps
Oxford and Cambridge	Shows real passion for the subject. Provides material for the personal statement and, crucially, for interview, where tutors explore how students think beyond the syllabus.
Top Russell Group courses (e.g. Durham, Bath, Warwick, Imperial, UCL, Edinburgh)	Helps students stand out from the many applicants with the same predicted grades. Builds the independent study skills universities value. Some universities make reduced offers for a strong EPQ.
Medicine, Dentistry and Veterinary Science	Relevant work experience, volunteering and reflection are expected. Wider reading prepares students for interviews that test motivation, ethics and understanding of the profession.
Competitive degree apprenticeships	Competitions, projects, research and work experience give concrete examples of the skills employers want: planning, problem-solving, teamwork and presenting. An industry-linked project shows commitment to the career.

Personal Development

Beyond any application, entering a competition, writing an essay or completing a research project builds confidence, resilience and independence. These skills help students succeed in Year 13, at university and in work.



HOW LYMM SIXTH FORM SUPPORTS STUDENTS

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While students lead their own exploration, they are not on their own. The Gateway Programme gives structured support at every stage.

Regular Gateway sessions.

Students meet regularly through Year 12 and Year 13. Sessions cover the programme, Oxbridge and medical applications, current opportunities, and how to make the most of each stage. Opportunities and resources are shared after each session.

Signposting opportunities.

We publicise super-curricular activities, access programmes, competitions and summer schools to all Gateway students. Subject teachers also promote olympiads, competitions and subject-specific tutorials.

Course and university guidance.

We give personalised feedback on course and university choices, and help students use Unifrog to research and shortlist.

Work experience.

We help students find and arrange specialist placements. We also point students towards virtual work experience such as Springpod.

University visits and talks.

We encourage attendance at Oxford, Cambridge and other open days. We arrange for former Gateway students, now at university, return to share their experience.

The EPQ.

Students can take the Extended Project Qualification through school, with supervision throughout.

Personal statement support.

A personal statement workshop runs in the summer term of Year 12. Students then receive one-to-one mentoring and feedback on their drafts.

Admissions test guidance.

We signpost the tests each course requires and the resources for preparing.

Interview preparation.

Students who are invited to interview take part in an interview workshop and one-to-one mock interviews with professional contacts.

Application support.

We guide students through the UCAS process, including the early October deadline, and write each student's UCAS reference. We also support students applying for degree apprenticeships.

OXBRIDGE, MEDICINE, VETERINARY SCIENCE AND DENTISTRY

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These courses have an early UCAS deadline, usually 15 October of Year 13, so preparation starts in Year 12.

What Oxford and Cambridge look for

- Passion for the subject
- Intellectual curiosity: enjoying hard questions and challenging answers
- A desire to discuss the subject well beyond the syllabus

The standard Oxbridge offer

- Cambridge: usually AAA. Oxford: usually A*AA.
- An A* is usually needed in the subject applied for.
- Resit results are rarely accepted.
- Four A levels are not always necessary: three A*/A grades are preferred to four at AABB.
- Strong GCSEs matter: typically eight grades at 8/9, with the average Oxbridge entrant holding around five grade 9s.

What admissions tutors consider for early-entry courses

- A level grades (predicted), evidence of assessment and mock scores throughout year 12, and subject combinations
- GCSE grades
- The UCAS reference and personal statement
- Submitted written work, where requested
- Admissions test results, where applicable
- Interview performance

UNIVERSITY OF OXFORD

UNIVERSITY OF CAMBRIDGE

Medicine, Dentistry and Veterinary Science.

Alongside academic super-curricular work, these courses expect meaningful work experience or volunteering in a caring or relevant setting, and reflection on what it taught the student. Most Medicine and Dentistry courses require the UCAT, usually sat in the summer holidays before Year 13. Veterinary courses often set specific animal and clinical experience requirements, so check each university early.

Widening-participation programmes.

Some programmes, such as the Pelican Programme and STEM SMART, are for students who meet widening-participation criteria. Examples include being care experienced, having been eligible for Free School Meals in the last six years, being from an ethnic or religious minority background, coming from an area under-represented at the university, or being or having been an asylum seeker or refugee. Please speak to us if you think your child may be eligible.



The Gateway Forum

The Gateway Forum is a new Sixth Form initiative, designed to challenge, inspire and prepare our most ambitious students through thought-provoking discussions.

We enrich our student's academic journeys as they prepare to apply for the most competitive courses including Oxbridge, Medicine, Dentistry and Veterinary Science, These pathways require more than just excellent grades, they demand intellectual curiosity, critical engagement and the ability to think beyond the syllabus. Experts from various fields meet with students and share their interests and inspire students to think outside the box and beyond their curricular studies.

STUDENTS ARE CHALLENGED TO ANSWER QUESTIONS FOR EXAMPLE:

- What assumptions are being made?
- Do you agree with the conclusions? Why?
- Did this challenge any of your beliefs?
- How confident to you feel discussing this topic?
- What would be your key message in an interview on this subject?
- Should this be left to individual choice or regulated by society?
- Is freedom more important that security in this context?
- Is it better to be persuasive or to be right?

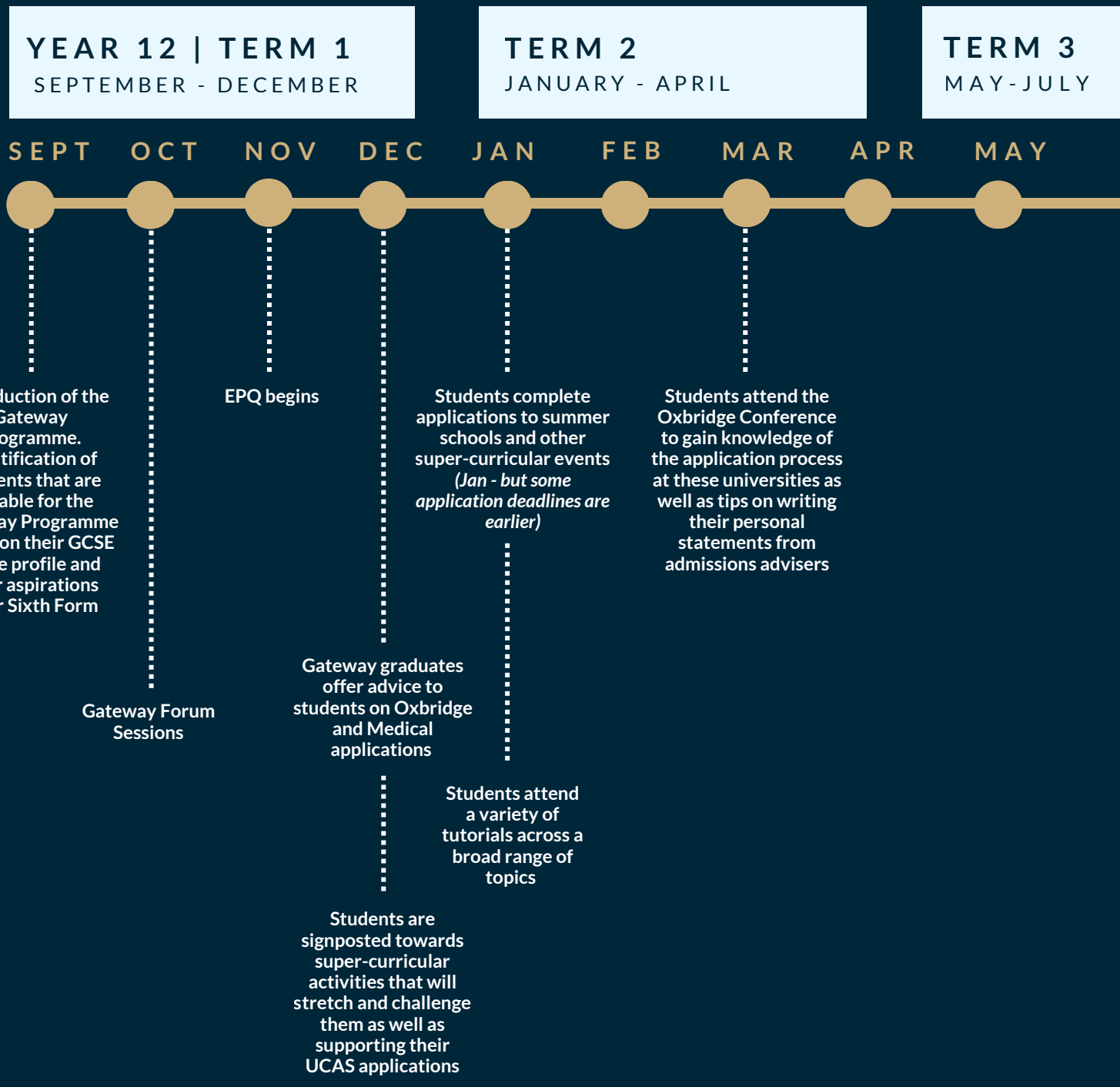
CONTRIBUTORS HAVE RECENTLY LED DISCUSSIONS ON THE FOLLOWING TOPICS:

- Justice - What's the Right Thing to do?
- Dangers of a single story
- Could AI make humans obsolete?
- Truth in a Post-Truth Era
- Using AI to deliver Psychological Therapy
- Should you respect or admire someone's achievements if they have done something wrong in their personal life?
- Gender and identity
- Does Chat GPT really think?

TIMELINE: YEAR 12 TO YEAR 13

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About twelve months separate the start of Year 12 from the early-entry deadline in October of Year 13. Degree apprenticeship vacancies open at different times, often from autumn of Year 13 onwards. Students considering this route should follow employers and Amazing Apprenticeships from Year 12 so they can become familiar with what opportunities are available and the processes involved.



Students applying to study Medicine, Dentistry or at Oxbridge Universities will need to complete their UCAS application by the early entry deadline of October 15th. Therefore we offer students this timeline of support to guide them through this application process:

Students will receive their responses from universities by March and students use their remainder of time to focus on revising and preparing for examinations within subjects to ensure they achieve the entry
requirements for their universities.





ROLL OF HONOURS 2024, 2025, 2026

NAME	A'LEVEL GRADES	COURSE
T Benson	A*A*A*A*	Newcastle University - Medicine and Surgery
R Holden	A*A*A*A*	University of Nottingham - Chemical Engineering
B Hutchison	A*A*A*A*	Durham University - Natural Sciences
L Quayle	A*A*A*A*	University of Bath - Mathematics
T Chu	A*A*A*	University of Cambridge - Engineering
E Allsup	A*A*A*	University of Bristol - Chemistry with Study Abroad in a Modern Language
T Bettridge	A*A*A*	Barclays Bank - Degree Apprenticeship
B Gomm	A*A*A*	University of Manchester - Chemistry with Industrial Experience
A Shaw	A*A*A*	University of Cambridge - Modern and Medieval Languages
R Tavernier	A*A*A*	Durham University - Mathematics
L Williams	A*A*A	Newcastle University - Medicine and Surgery
N Abbassi-Stewart	A*AAAA	University of Warwick - Mathematics and Physics
L Chow	A*A*A*	Durham University - Biochemistry
J Lo	A*A*A*	Imperial College London - Chemical Engineering
C Masters	A*A*A*	The University of Edinburgh - English Literature
S Ottiwell	A*A*A*	Lancaster University - Ecology and Conservations
K Vyas	A*A*AA	Queen Mary University of London - English and European Law
H Yiu	A*A*A	University of Manchester - Mathematics
L Williams	A*A*AB	University of Sheffield - Engineering
R Rushton	A*AA	University of Exeter - Mining Engineering
J Cooke	A*A*A	Durham University - Natural Sciences
G Mitchell	A*A*A	University of Warwick - Economics
S Cheung	AAAA	Newcastle University - Medicine and Surgery
M Ottiwell	AAA	Newcastle University - Medicine and Surgery
E Shaw	A*AA	Queen's University Belfast - Medicine
E Dobson	A*A*A	University of Nottingham - Veterinary Medicine and Surgery
S Wall	AAA	University of Liverpool - Dentistry

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