

The background features a large purple silhouette of a person in a dynamic pose, with one arm extended. A large yellow trapezoidal shape is positioned in the lower-left. A colorful starburst, composed of several overlapping triangles in shades of orange, green, yellow, and blue, is located at the intersection of the purple figure and the yellow shape. The top half of the page is a solid pink color.

Athena Sixth Form Downham Market

Entry Requirements

Our Courses

We offer a broad range of courses suitable for all types of learners. The types of subjects offered include:

A Levels are one of the main routes to higher education and university, although they are also useful if you want to go straight into employment. An A Level is a Level 3 qualification consisting of four modules studied over two years. Most students study 3 A Levels.

Vocational courses focus on a specific subject area, combining practical and academic study. They are designed to give students the knowledge and skills relevant to a variety of jobs or may offer specialist qualifications for a particular industry sector. They can also be a route to higher education.



Entry Requirements

A Level Programme Entry Requirements – 2027 Entry

- Minimum of 5 GCSEs at grade 5 or above including English Language or Lit and Maths with a 6 in the subjects of choice

The opportunity to study four Advanced Level subjects will be offered to some particularly well-qualified applicants, currently defined as students who have achieved at least an average grade 7 across their GCSE subjects.

Vocational and Applied Diploma Entry Requirements – 2027 Entry

- Minimum of 5 GCSEs at grade 4 or above including at least a grade 4 in English Language and Literature and Maths
- Merit at Level 2 in chosen area of study if studied

How to choose your courses at Athena

A	B	C	D	E
Further Maths	Chemistry	Physics	Maths	Biology
Geography	History	Religious Studies	English	French
Sociology	Criminology	Psychology	Law	Accountancy
Travel and Tourism	PE	Economics	Food / Nutrition	Film
H and S*	Politics	Theatre Studies	Art	Music
				H and S*

When choosing your courses, subjects are arranged into timetable groups called Option Blocks (eg Blocks A, B, C, D and E). Because all subjects listed within the same block are taught at the exact same time, you can only select one subject from each block. * H & S is a double A level and you need to select both blocks to take this course.

A Level Courses

Additional Entry Requirements

Accountancy	7 in Maths
Biology	6 in GCSE Biology or 66 in GCSE Combined Science
Chemistry	6 in GCSE Chemistry or 66 in GCSE Combined Science
Economics	6 in a Humanities subject
English Literature	6 in GCSE English language or Lit
Film Studies	6 in a Humanities subject
Fine Art	6 in GCSE Art (if studied)
French	6 in GCSE French
Geography	6 in GCSE Geography
History	6 in GCSE History or a Humanities subject
Mathematics	7 in GCSE Maths
Mathematics (Further)	8 in GCSE Maths (can only be taken as a 4 th subject)
Music	6 in GCSE Music or a grade 5 in instrument / voice
Physical Education	6 in GCSE PE if taken or performance in at least one sport from the OCR approved list at club level or higher
Physics	6 in GCSE Physics or 66 in GCSE Combined Science
Politics	6 in a Humanities subject
Psychology	5 in a GCSE Science and 6 in GCSE English
Religious Studies	6 is RS (if studied) or a 6 in an English or Humanities subject
Sociology	6 in a Humanities subject
Spanish	6 in GCSE Spanish
Theatre Studies	6 in GCSE Drama (if studied)

Alternative Academic Qualifications

Course Type

Additional Entry Requirements

Food and Nutrition	Extended Certificate	none
Health and Social Care	Cambridge National	none
Law	Extended Certificate	5 in a Humanities subject
Level 3 Travel and Tourism	Extended Certificate	none
Sport and Physical Activity	Cambridge Technical	4 in GCSE PE or an equivalent (Level 2 Pass in Cambridge Nationals)

FAQs

Will I be able to do work experience at Athena?

It is an expectation that you will. Your tutor will help you to source high quality work experience and help you to plan it into your schedule effectively. This is all tracked through Unifrog, allowing staff to fully support students as they progress through their Level 3 studies.

What sort of trips do you do?

We have foreign travel included as part of our offer, trips to Barcelona, Rome, Kenya are currently planned. We also have a range of subject trips (from theatre trips in English to trips to the Supreme Court for Criminology) as well as trips to universities and local employer workshops.

I don't want to go to university, can I still come to Athena?

Absolutely! We have been successful in placing students in a range of futures ranging from degrees in Oxford to apprenticeships at local and national companies. Our futures programme showcases opportunities for university and apprenticeships. We are very proud that many of our former students are now contributing positively to our local community, having taken up high level apprenticeships with local firms.

I want to do the Extended Project, do you offer it?

Yes! We have many experienced staff and deliver the EPQ in year 12 to students who would like to do it. The EPQ is valued by many universities - often lowering the grades required to access the course of your choice!

In my lower school I had support from the SEN department, will I still receive this at Athena?

We have a full time study manager who is available all day to support you with everything from organising your time, to booking you some time in The Sanctuary or liaising with your teachers for you.

We are supported by an outstanding SEN department so much of your support will continue. Examples of this are things such as support plans and access arrangements in exams.

I want to be treated like an adult, is Athena the place for me?

Yes. We have a very different learning environment to secondary school, with lessons taking place in small seminar style rooms and specialist A Level teaching spaces. Students are allocated self-supported study time, some use the outdoor recreation areas or make use of the Athenium (library) to study, some plan work experience in these slots or use the gym.

What other opportunities are there at Athena?

Athenians are full of life and energy! Our Xtra programme responds to student interest each year - it regularly features Talking Teas, The P(H)ub Quiz, Duke of Edinburgh Award Scheme and our highlight of the year, The Summer Ball!

11/06/10/2026



APPLY NOW