

A LEVEL CHEMISTRY FAQs

Q: At school, my Chemistry teacher didn't seem to know that much Chemistry, what about the staff at Bilborough?

All five of us have degrees (and even three doctorates) in Chemistry, formal teaching qualifications and we have all been teaching A level Chemistry at Bilborough for over a decade. All those thousands of lessons and support sessions have given us a chance to really get good at it! We are all subject specialists – you won't get taught chemistry by a biologist!

Q: There are other places closer, so why should I pick Bilborough to study Chemistry at?

We get consistently great results and value added, we have dedicated labs and equipment and we don't split our time also planning for younger students. We make our lessons fun and engaging and overall you'll have a better experience at Bilborough!

Q: I heard the classes are really big, tell me how big are the classes really?

In Chemistry we have an agreed maximum of 21 and many classes are smaller. We are very happy with our class sizes and get great results the way they are. Remember this is smaller than your GCSE classes but still allows lessons to have a real buzz.

Q: When can I get help outside of lessons?

Normally this is every lunchtime from 12.10 until about 12.50 and then help is available in other forms too. If remote learning is still taking place then you'll have a full package of remote support. This has been working well during lockdown and we're getting better at it all the time. I don't envy our friends who teach in schools as they have to try to plan for, teach and support so many different year groups.

Q: Will I have to leave at the end of the first year if I don't do well?

Almost all students successfully transition from the end of year 12 into year 13. Typically one or two students out of around 130 decide either individually or after discussion with their teacher, to drop chemistry and take another subject. If you've got the entry grades and work hard every week you'll still be successfully taking the course until you have sat the exams at the end of year 13.

Q: What other subjects should I pick along with Chemistry?

You really can pick any combination, although a lot of top performing students also do Maths A-level and most students are doing another science as well. If your maths is truly outstanding a great combination is Chemistry, Physics, Maths and Further Maths. The maths in A level chemistry isn't beyond GCSE Maths it is just you'll be using maths a lot.

Q: I'm not sure I'll get the entry requirements for Chemistry, what should I do?

Investigate other courses' entry grades so you have a back up plan and then simply wait for results day/enrolment for further discussion. e.g. see BTEC Science below

Q: But really, I don't think I will get a 6 in Maths please can I do Chemistry?

If you can't comfortably get a 6 at GCSE Maths don't take A-level Chemistry anywhere, you'd do much better on another course. Even when we've made exceptions because say the school didn't give them a chance to get a 6 or their maths teacher was poorly, the students with a 5 don't cope and drop out. The same applies to the other entry grades.

Q: I heard you set so much homework I won't have time to have a life, is this true?

During a normal year we require a 5 full hours homework a week although some students in year 13 choose to do as much as 7 hours some weeks. That might sound a lot but remember you'll have free periods unlike at school. Five hours is still a tiny percentage of your time and most of our top performing students do loads of other activities apart from their studies.

Q: I'm scared I won't get to know other students, will I be alone?

We go to great lengths to get you mingling and meeting other students. Typically we have you sitting with new students for one lesson each week. At first that might sound awkward but after a few weeks you'll love these social lessons.

Q: What if I don't get the GCSE grades to do Science A levels?

You could have a look at one of our BTEC Applied Science courses. These are what we recommend for students who have not got the grades to do science A levels, or who find they cope better doing some coursework alongside exams. These courses will allow progression to university or an apprenticeship after college.