

A LEVEL COMPUTER SCIENCE FAQs

Q: What resources will I need to buy?

You will need to buy a large folder or 2 smaller folders for each of the 2 theory components, folder dividers, A4 hole punched lined paper and other stationary as you will need to ensure these are with you in all lessons. We ask all our students to produce handwritten notes in sessions, so these are accessible to you for revision purposes. With regards to the dividers, we ask our students to have a divider for each of the 9 or 10 units in each component, so you can place your notes and lesson resources inside your folder in an organised manner. Any other resources needed for the course; we will supply for your studies.

Q: What is the difference between Computer Science and IT?

Main and biggest difference is that in Computer Science you must do programming whereas CTEC IT has no programming involved. Computer Science is about incorporating mathematics to create new applications through programming, design and development. You will also study theoretical aspects to Computer Science that includes looking at algorithms, the role of an operating system, fourth generation programming languages and human computer interfaces to name a few. You can choose to complete both computer Science and CTEC IT if you wish. However, remember this does narrow down your options for the future.

Q: What programming language do we use on the A-level Computer Science course & why?

We use VB.Net. The reason behind this is that most students will have learned Python at school. This way they will learn a new programming language to allow them to test their understanding of the programming concepts. VB.Net also allows us to work in different programming paradigms. VB.Net is also a good IDE which available free for use at home too.

Q: I am thinking of buying a computer should I buy a Mac or MS Windows machine?

Due to the programming language we use it is best to have a Windows based machine as Mac will not allow you to use all of the programming paradigms.

Q: What grades do I need to enrol on the A-level Computer Science course?

So long as you meet the college entry requirements, achieving a minimum of 5 GCSE grades point 4 or higher, which includes English and Maths, You do not need to have a GCSE qualification in Computer Science, having it may be helpful, but it is not an essential entry requirement as all students that are committed and hardworking make good progress on this course.

Q: How many people will be in my class?

Our Computer Science rooms can accommodate 22 students at any one time. We tend to get about 20 students per class over 3 groups. (This may change due to the current Covid19 pandemic)

Q: How many lessons a week do I have in A-Level Computer Science?

As with all of your subjects, you get 3 lessons per week. Each lesson is 1.5 hours long. You are also expected to undertake a minimum of 4 hours independent study outside of these lessons (through a range of homework activities) per A-Level subject. (This may change due to the current Covid19 pandemic)

Q: How many exams do I have to do for Computer Science?

You will need to complete 2 exams at the end of the second year. The exams are 80% of the course and 20% is for the coursework. You will not be asked to write programs in the exam, but you will be asked to design and follow algorithms in the component 1 exam.

Q: Will the exam board set the coursework scenario?

No. Unlike GCSE, at A-level Computer Science you will be able to choose a scenario you want to base your project on as long as it stores, manipulates and retrieves data. We will start the coursework at the end of year 12 and it will go through until Easter of year 13.