



# LOUGHBOROUGH High School

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Policy Title: 03b Academic Extension Policy

Approved By: LHS Board

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Point of Contact (Reviewer): Dr Sean Reid

# Academic Extension Policy 2024-2026

## Introduction

This policy represents the Loughborough High School provision for our most able students. In other schools this might be referred to as Gifted & Talented, or Able, Gifted and Talented.

It is general educational practice in the United Kingdom for schools to make provision for their most able. This is a dimension of provision that is inspected: more able students are expected to progress at a rate appropriate to their ability, irrespective of class, school or national averages. As well as this, the spirit of the Equality Act of 2010 demands all are treated fairly and with due consideration: as such, our most able students should not be forgotten or overlooked based on their enhanced ability or just left to their own devices. This chimes with our commitment to Fundamental British Values, in catering to the needs and demands of all students as individuals in a democratic and respectful way.

Due to the provision made for students in co-curricular arenas at Loughborough High School (the 'talented' side of the old Gifted & Talented coin), management of such high-performing students in sports, music, drama and the arts will be devolved to these departments.

## Aims and rationale

The thrust of academic extension as a general, school-wide principle fits with Loughborough High School's selective intake and is the spirit of our policy. Our average student sits within the top 10% of the national cohort, and thus we aim to intellectually and academically extend all of our students.

However, within this provision there is still a place and desire to identify our most academically-able students and extend and challenge them to the utmost of their academic capabilities. We specifically provide extension for our most able sportspeople, dramatists, artists and musicians, and we should similarly do so for our most able academic girls.

## Academic extension for all our students

Loughborough High School's students, being able and in many cases exceedingly so, should benefit not just from interesting and engaging 'core' content in lessons, but also by going 'off-piste' to develop and extend thinking by looking at new, unusual, or related topics to those studied in lessons. This should be considered a central part of our philosophy: it should not be seen as an optional extra, considering the highly able students we teach in comparison to national averages. High-quality teaching and learning is at the heart of all we do.

Outside of the classroom, students can be extended in many ways, including (but not limited to):

- Attending academic extension society aimed at broadening the students' intellectual horizons
- Undertaking academic extension days in Years 7 - 10 which encourage the students to work collaboratively on areas beyond the standard curriculum
- Visits from external speakers as arranged by departments
- Attending our academic speaker programme series which is open to all in the school community
- Visits to external sites / speakers
- The running of subject-based clubs and societies
- Collaborative work between departments to fuel thinking about the connections between subjects
- Recommendations of reading lists or articles for wider reading
- The production of department or year group magazines, where students can write about existing or new interests to enhance their learning
- Undertaking the EPQ (Sixth Form), HPQ (Years 10-11) or other external qualifications which we offer as a school as an additional qualification

## The Academic Scholars' Programme (for our most able students)

### Aims, provision and constraints

We have a specific focus on our most able students through our Academic Scholars' Programme. The programme's aim is to identify and then stretch our most able students. This is achieved through a mix of activities. Wherever possible, we try to offer academic activities that are open to any student who would like to attend sessions, irrespective of whether they are an Academic Scholar or not, such as our academic society meetings which are open to all students but with the expectation that Academic Scholars should attend where possible.

## Identification of Academic Scholars

Particularly able academic students at Loughborough High School will be identified as Academic Scholars in a number of ways. It should be emphasised that these students are being highlighted as being particularly gifted in the Loughborough High School context, even if almost all students at the school are highly able compared to national norms. If someone is not identified as an Academic Scholar, that does not mean they are not able or intelligent compared to the national average.

We aim to identify approximately 10-15% of a given year group and aim to do so in the most objective ways possible, with new invitations made each year. Our ways of identification are ongoing annually and dynamic, being:

1. Application assessments
2. Entrance baseline testing
3. School examination results at the end of the year
4. In exceptional circumstances, teacher or departmental recommendations by teachers might be considered

Once identified, pupils are invited to join the programme through contact with their parents / carers. Parents and carers have the right to decline entry onto the Academic Scholars' Programme if they would prefer their daughter not to be placed on our register. Once entered onto the register, Academic Scholars will not be removed between Years 7 – 11 unless the child, parents or carers request so or there is active disengagement with the programme.

A central register of Academic Scholars will be available to all academic staff once formulated each year, highlighting those demanding particular attention within the school.

## Provision for students who excel in a subject/s but are not an Academic Scholar

The Academic Scholars' Programme identifies students who excel across a range of aptitudes, tests and subjects. However, there is therefore the possibility that a student might be the most able student in a given subject in a year group, but not be on the Academic Scholars' Programme.

Teachers and Heads of Department are encouraged to identify exceptional students in their subjects, and what can be done to extend these gifted students specifically in the subject in question whether this individual is a member of the Academic Scholars' Programme or not.

## Provision for those on the Academic Scholars' Programme

We run the formal Academic Scholars' Programme in Years 7 – 11. Within these years, teachers are encouraged to extend and push these students in class through a variety of ways. Central provision away from lessons includes a mix of extension sessions, and the advertisement of appropriate extension opportunities like essay competitions.

We do not formally run the Academic Scholars' Programme in the Sixth Form (although we maintain a register) as we believe that by this age students should be taking responsibility for their own academic development. However, within this year group we offer Oxbridge, vet, dentistry and medical university preparation as well as significant subject-based opportunities revolving around clubs, trips, essay competitions and the like.

## Extension for Academic Scholars' Programme students in class

Teachers and Tutors should have higher expectations of the most able; reports data can and should be challenged if an able student should be achieving more. In general, extension provision should be considered a central part of a Loughborough High School diet: it should not, as the Sutton Trust put it, be considered a 'bolt on.'

Within the classroom, extension can be achieved through:

- Setting in certain subjects, allowing the most able to go further and faster
- Activities are tailored to test gifted students in difference to the main class
- Gifted students being given different stimuli or resources to other students
- Ability seating, where gifted students are banded together in group work and given a more difficult task
- Gifted students being encouraged to synthesise, evaluate and recreate their learning if finishing early
- Direct questioning of gifted students asking higher-order questions or double questioning to really ingrain learning (using, for example, Bloom's Taxonomy)

## Extension of Academic Scholars outside of class

Outside of the classroom, extension for Academic Scholars can be achieved through:

- School-wide extension society meetings, which are targeted and pitched at the most able even if open to all
- Ability grouping on school trips, where gifted students are banded together and might be taken to different rooms or activities than others on the trip to extend them beyond simply visiting the exhibition / gallery etc.
- Invitations to those recognised as excelling in a particular subject to lectures within departments
- Master classes, where the most able are invited to attend a specific workshop
- Departmental-based extension societies, particularly for university preparation sessions for interviews
- Designated lead roles for gifted students in club and society meetings
- External competitions such as Olympiads, essay writing prizes, design challenges etc.
- Acting as peer mentors for younger students
- School publication of selected essays / articles by students celebrating exceptional work

Please note that the above are suggestions and are not prescribed either to staff or students. Opportunities will vary depending upon the student, their interests and those of the subject.

## Monitoring those on the Academic Scholars' Programme

The Deputy Head (Academic) and Academic Extension Coordinator will monitor those on the Academic Scholars' Programme to ensure satisfactory progress is being made (or that there is no relative underperformance) through:

- Informal discussions with teachers, Tutors and other relevant individuals like parents or carers
- School registers to ensure Academic Scholars are attending school as expected
- The school sanctions records to ensure Academic Scholars are engaged in learning
- The reports system to ensure that able students are achieving well
- The rewards system to ensure that able students are achieving well
- End-of-year examinations to ensure that able students are achieving well

We will also annually survey those on the Academic Scholars' Programme, to ensure they feel they are being adequately challenged and stretched both inside and outside the classroom.

**Dr Sean Reid**  
**Deputy Head (Academic)**  
**April 2024**