

# ETON COLLEGE SCHOOL PROFILE

2020/21



HEAD MASTER: Simon Henderson MA  
 DEPUTY HEAD (Academic): Tom Hawkins MA  
 COLLEGE ADVISORS: Timothy Eddis MA  
 t.eddis@etoncollege.org.uk  
 Michèle Collias BA JD  
 m.collias@etoncollege.org.uk

ETON COLLEGE  
 WINDSOR, BERKSHIRE,  
 SL4 6DW  
 +44 (0)1753 370100  
 www.etoncollege.com

In mid-March 2020, amid growing uncertainty surrounding the Covid-19 pandemic and only days before a national lockdown was announced in the UK, Eton College took the decision to end the Winter term early and sent all the boys home. For the ten days of term time that remained the school rapidly switched to online teaching mode.

After considerable planning during the Easter vacation, the school unveiled “Eton Virtual” for the duration of the Summer term 2020 (April 21 – June 27). The provision of online learning was intended to replicate, as faithfully as possible, the various strands with which a boy would be expected to engage if the school had been in session as normal. In addition to online academic lessons, boys were expected to take part in extra-curricular activities encompassing sports, creative arts, community engagement, and self-improvement. Boys were asked to keep an online diary of their accomplishments, which in turn helped to inform the award of an Eton Virtual Diploma (rated Pass, Merit, or Distinction). The Diploma does not form part of a boy’s permanent academic record and thus does not appear on the Transcript, but Counselors may make reference to notable achievements in their letters of reference.

For the Seniors, whose A-Level results were ultimately granted on the basis of Centre Assessed Grades, their academic learning proceeded by a series of 2-week elective courses offered by Eton Masters. The courses encouraged the boys to explore in depth (by looking beyond the

syllabus in subjects familiar to them) as well as breadth (by opting for subjects that they had not previously studied). These electives were not formally examined, but a fortnightly reporting cycle allowed House Masters and Tutors to follow boys’ engagement.

For the Juniors, preparing to enter their final A-Level year, academic lessons continued as normal (albeit to an amended timetable). Timed assessments were widely used in the delivery of the curriculum, the better to refine the accuracy of predicted grades, which are included on the Transcripts. Accommodation was made as best as possible for those boys located in time zones outside the UK, such that most Eton boys reached the end of their penultimate year with only minor disruption to their academic progression.

Notwithstanding the quarantine now imposed on boys who have tested positive for Covid-19, and those suspected of being close contacts, the Autumn term 2020 has started as expected with all boys now back on site at the school.

## Eton College US University Admissions (2018-2020 totals)

7+ CANDIDATES		4 – 6 CANDIDATES		3 CANDIDATES OR FEWER			
Brown	Princeton	Dartmouth	U Chicago	CMC	Johns Hopkins	Notre Dame	UCLA
Columbia	U Penn	Duke	Yale	Cornell	Middlebury	NYU	UNC
Harvard		Stanford		Emory	MIT	U Michigan	USC
				Georgetown	Northwestern	UC Berkeley	Wesleyan

## UK Institutions 2018 -2020 (25+ per year)

Cambridge University  
 Durham University  
 Edinburgh University  
 Oxford University



## THE SCHOOL

Eton College is one of the most prestigious independent schools in the UK, with a distinguished record going back to its foundation by King Henry VI in 1440. It is an academically selective full boarding boys' school admitting approximately 260 new boys at Year 9 (aged 13) of whom most would expect to go to universities in the UK or abroad at the end of Year 13 (aged 17/18). Each year many of the students (the number has varied from 65 to 95 in recent years) go on to study at the universities of Oxford and Cambridge. Comparable top-echelon schools in the UK are Winchester, Westminster, and St. Paul's.

## SCHOOL LIFE

In many ways Eton is itself like a small university, with boys living on a campus at the centre of a thriving market town, within walking distance of Royal Windsor. Entrance is by means of a rigorous admissions test, with a diversity of academic prizes and accolades subsequently available to encourage a competitive ethos once a boy is enrolled at the school.

Considerable emphasis is placed on educating the whole boy. In practice, this is achieved through the encouragement of excellence in whatever field the boy chooses: there are dozens of societies to which boy secretaries invite external speakers (on average two meetings per evening, throughout the year); there are six representative sports teams in every age group for the major sports (Rugby, Soccer, Rowing, Cricket); and countless minor sports.

The school has a professional-grade theatre, in which house and school plays are produced throughout the year. The recently upgraded music schools and art department boast first rate accommodation and facilities.

Active participation in the life of the broader Eton community is encouraged through diverse outreach activities, which include among others visiting care homes for the elderly and mentoring in local state schools.

At Eton there are typically 50 boys in a boarding house, ten in each year group. Each house is run by a resident House Master who is an experienced member of the teaching staff. He has a comprehensive view of all aspects of an individual student's development; in this way a boy benefits from a strong pastoral base within the larger, varied school community. All teachers and tutors of the boys regularly report to the House Master, rather than to the Head Master, and it is for this reason that the House Master writes US university counselor references.

## EDUCATIONAL PHILOSOPHY

The school's day-to-day endeavours are guided by its publically stated aims

- to promote the best habits of independent thought and learning in the pursuit of excellence;
- to provide a broadly-based education designed to enable all boys to discover their strengths, and to make the most of their talents within Eton and beyond;
- to engender respect for individuality, difference, the importance of teamwork, and the contribution that each boy makes to the life of the school and the community;
- to support pastoral care that nurtures physical health, emotional maturity, and spiritual richness;
- to foster self-confidence, enthusiasm, perseverance, tolerance, and integrity.

## CURRICULUM & EXAMINATIONS CONTEXT

In the UK, students study a wide range of academic subjects (usually 10 to 12) from Year 10 to Year 11 when they are examined externally by nationally-accredited examination boards (at GCSE). The grades run from A\* (top 5% nationally) through A, B, C, D, E, F, to G. A numerical grading system from 9 (best) to 1 (worst) has recently been phased in for most subjects, with grade equivalence shown below.

Post-GCSE, students then choose three or four subjects for in-depth study (typically 5-6 hours of lessons and 4 or more hours for personal study in each subject each week) up to Advanced Level (A-Level) exams at the end of Year 13. Grades run from A\* (top 8% nationally) through A, B, C, D, to E.

Recognised public exam grades are only given officially for these subjects at the end of each course taught. There is no Eton counterpart to school-administered GPA typical of US institutions.

In all cases, except those where a student delays application until after he has taken his final A-level exams and obtained his results, when deciding whether to offer a place, UK Universities rely upon GCSE results, A-Level predicted grades (based largely on performance in internal examinations), a personal statement from the student, and a reference from (in Eton's case) the House Master.

There is an alternative two year course that leads to the equivalent of an A-level: the Pre-U exam, used at Eton for boys studying Modern Languages, History, History

of Art, English, and Music. These courses should be considered the same academic level as the A-level. Grade predictions for the Pre-U exam run from Distinction 1-3, through to Merit 1-3, and Pass 1-3. They are equivalent to A-level grades according to the table overleaf except that a grade of D1 represents an exceptional performance that is beyond the A\*, the highest grade available at A-level. As a policy, Eton transcripts do not predict D1 grades unless in exceptional circumstances.

The greater specialisation in the A-Level years makes direct comparison with the US system of evaluation difficult. British students take fewer subjects aged 16 to 18, but study them in more depth than do students in a US curriculum. All A-Level and Pre-U courses reach the same, high standard, and are possibly equivalent to AP courses in their content and level of expectation of the student's performance, depth of knowledge, and understanding of the subject. All boys take terminal exams in Year 13 (Pre-U and A2 Levels). Eton Transcripts, therefore, place great emphasis on grade predictions for its senior classmen. The formal process of data collection for this begins in Year 12, with each boy's grade prediction made subject to evaluation by class teachers and Heads of Department prior to being confirmed.

The Eton Transcript is collated internally by the school's examinations officer and confirms the student's grades in public exams (GCSE, and A-Level/Pre-U if taken). If necessary, the student applying for a place in a US university can provide copies of the official certificates awarded for these exams. Moreover, a boy may be asked to attach examples of his work to help you assess his academic standard.

A-LEVEL AND AS GRADES	n/a	A*	A	B		C	D	E	
PRE-U GRADES	D1	D2	D3	M1	M2	M3	P1	P2	P3
PRE-U BANDS	DISTINCTION			MERIT			PASS		
GCSE LETTER GRADES	n/a	A*	A	B	C	D	E		
GCSE NUMBER GRADES	9	8	7	6	5	4	3		





## MAKING ONE'S MARK

Whatever the aptitudes or interests of an Etonian student, the school is geared to helping him achieve diverse ambitions. Academically, there exist numerous ways for a boy to distinguish himself. At Eton, in addition to the public exams, there are twice yearly internal exams that serve the purpose of encouraging scholarship and guiding the streaming of boys into classes of similar ability.

- On entering Eton, 14 boys each year are awarded a **King's Scholar** designation as a result of excellent performance in a very testing Eton exam. All of these boys would be in the top 5-10% of the 260 in each year, and would rank nationally in the top 1% of their age group.
- The award of a **Distinction** is given to those who score extremely well in a range of subjects. About 40 **Distinctions** are awarded in each year-group of 260, with Merits awarded to a further 40 boys.
- Boys who gain sufficient **Distinctions** are awarded the title **Oppidan Scholar**, an award similar to the 'Dean's List'.

Eton has a long tradition of awarding extra-curricular academic prizes for written work completed outside the set syllabus that are adjudicated by leading academics in the field. Occasionally, the prizes are based on examination of a set text. Boys are free to enter as they wish, and many thereby opt to extend their knowledge in their preferred subject(s). There is one leading prize awarded for each academic department; *attaining success in these awards represents the pinnacle of internal achievement.*

Eton is not all about academic work. There is a considerable burden of responsibility placed on senior boys to assist in the administration of the school. Some are prefects appointed by a committee of their peers and select staff, while others apply to run societies or other aspects of the school's back office function. The Eton Society ('Pop'), Sixth Form Select, House Captains, and House Captains of Games are called upon to support Masters in the broad variety of co-curricular aspects of Eton life on an almost daily basis, acting as role models for boys in their Houses and also more widely across the school. In recognition of their responsibilities, these boys are allowed to wear distinctive variations of the standard school white tie and tailsuit.

There are currently 129 Music Scholars and Music Exhibitioners at Eton. In addition to their one-to-one instrumental lessons, boys take part in a wide range of music ensembles that run seven days a week, from the Symphony Orchestra and Choirs to Jazz Bands. Boys are encouraged to arrange their own concerts across all musical genres, and they participate in an active outreach programme with local schools and charities.

Excellence in sporting and cultural endeavours is also encouraged. Eton troupes have been a regular feature at the Edinburgh Fringe for 25 years, and the school counts a number of Olympians amongst its alumni. Finally, a strong theme of service prevails at the school. Having honed their skills while at Eton through the debating club and/or active network of social service duties, a number of alumni subsequently choose to pursue careers in politics or charitable work.