



Glenalmond College | inspiring learning

Scholars and Exhibitioners



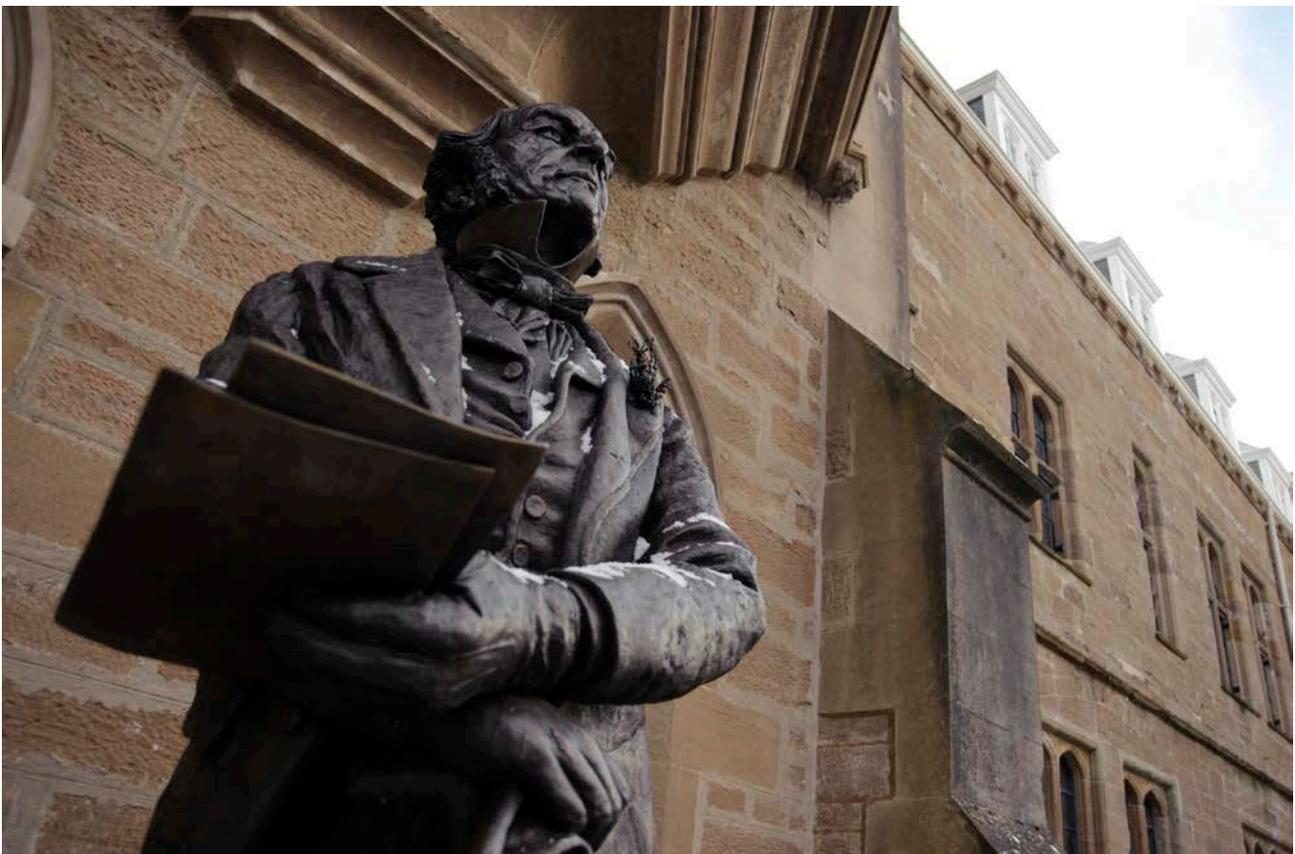
www.glenalmondcollege.co.uk

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Scholars and Exhibitioners

Glenalmond College has a rich academic environment in which the scholars, exhibitioners and academically gifted pupils take a central role. They follow a linear programme of taught courses, lectures and seminars from Third Form to Upper Sixth that is designed to develop intellectual strength, rigour and creativity. The focus of the programme is to broaden intellectual aspiration, engender clarity of thought and to prepare for entry into elite academic institutions when they leave Glenalmond. In addition to the extensive academic tutoring with which all pupils in the College are provided the academically gifted are also overseen by specialist mentors who work with individuals to develop the skills and strategies needed to reach the highest levels of academic attainment.

All academic scholars and exhibitioners are members of the William Bright Society (WBS). This is a school body for academically gifted pupils and it aims to provide the depth, richness and colour that the highest level of academic pursuit should always possess. Many academic scholars and exhibitioners are entered into the Oxbridge Preparation Programme. This takes place from Fifth Form and is designed to prepare pupils for the specific application requirements for entry into elite academic institutions and undergraduate courses when they leave Glenalmond.



Structure of the scholarship programme

The **William Bright Society (WBS)** is the school body for academically gifted pupils, including all academic scholars and exhibitioners. The WBS programme is split into two parallel themes which run concurrently through the academic year: *WBS Thinking Series* and *WBS Lecture Series*.

	WBS Thinking Series	WBS Lecture Series		Additional Programmes
Third Form	Academic development programme	Academic lecture programme with guest speakers	Discussion and seminar programme	Literature review; Boarding house academic mentoring
Fourth Form	An introduction to knowledge (Part I)			Long-term academic planning and specialisation
Fifth Form	An introduction to knowledge (Part II)			
Lower Sixth	An introduction to critical thinking			
Upper Sixth	An introduction to big concept thinking			
				Oxbridge preparation programme; Independent research programmes and university partnership schemes

WBS Thinking Series

This is a structured programme of academic courses for all academic scholars and other invited WBS members to develop critical reasoning, promote philosophical argument and embrace conceptually challenging ideas. Its purpose is to promote a culture of expansive thinking, academic initiative and ambition. The five-year course is designed for those with high intellectual aspirations and a deep enjoyment of academic pursuit. It has a horizontal structure to provide academically gifted pupils the opportunity to explore new ideas and concepts with their own peer group and to allow for age-specific programme delivery.

WBS Lecture Series

This is an expansive programme of lectures, seminars and discussion sessions to broaden experience, aspiration and the academic perspective of pupils involved. The lecture programme hosts external speakers from outside the college and the seminar programme is delivered by senior WBS members to the Junior WBS members. The programme has a vertical structure and all academically gifted pupils meet together for these events to allow for engagement and discussion between year groups.

Additional Programmes

Additional programmes are provided for pupils in specific year groups to ensure ongoing academic development at key stages of their education. These may be generic development, such as promoting high quality reading through the Third Form literature review, or more specific educational and skills programmes, such as the Oxbridge preparation programme and development of independent research skills in the Sixth Form. Additional mentoring and support is also provided throughout the programme to develop academic attainment, progress and specialism.



WBS Thinking Series

Third Form Programme

Subject specialists work with small groups of WBS members on a one-year **academic development programme** through entry into some of the most illustrious national academic competitions for this age group. These include: the Royal Geographical Society's Young Geographer of the Year Award, the Royal Society of Chemistry's Top-of-the-Bench Award, and the Pushkin Prize for English.

Pupils also attend master-class sessions in academic disciplines outside of normal school curricula. These include: the science of linguistics; introductions to political theory; macroeconomics; history of art; historical source analysis; philosophy; medical sciences.

WBS members in Third Form are also required to follow a **literature review** throughout the year focused on academic topics that tie with the WBS Lecture Series. Pupils are supported in the boarding house environment with additional **academic mentoring** aimed to raise ambition, attainment and academic standards to the very highest level.



Fourth and Fifth Form Programme

The Fourth and Fifth Form programme is entitled '**An introduction to knowledge**'. It is designed to develop in pupils an appreciation for the source of knowledge, different ways and types of 'knowing' and the challenges and limitations that are associated with each of them. The course is an abstract and challenging programme that pushes pupils outside of their comfortable perception of what is 'true' and 'not

true'. The thinking process is examined in fine detail and this is then applied to refine the approach to addressing and evaluating new ideas.

Topics addressed include: paradox theory and fallacy of thought; artificial intelligence; chaos theory; fractal universe theory; Epistemological analysis; mathematical and scientific knowledge; non-inductive forms of knowledge; truth in human sciences and the arts; theories and values of 'truth'.

Pupils meet with WBS staff to discuss **long term academic planning** for the transition from the GCSE year to Sixth Form. Meetings are also used to promote the development of pupils' academic specialisation through use of the WBS extended reading library.

Lower Sixth Programme

The Lower Sixth Programme is entitled '**An introduction to critical thinking**'. This course focuses on developing the critical method to thinking and to developing the skills needed to construct robust and coherent argument. It promotes a critically evaluative edge to discussion and source analysis, based both upon literature and scientific/mathematical source material. It also uses the philosophical principles of logic and reason to counter weakness in argument, to address barriers to critical thinking and the validity and application of philosophical premise.

Scholars are also invited to undertake additional **academic research projects** such as the science-based CREST award or the AQA Extended Project Qualification. These are completed between the AS and A2 examinations in the Sixth Form; both schemes are externally examined, nationally recognised and represent additional UCAS points for the pupil. It is an opportunity for pupils to engage in independent academic research with a personal project supervisor to support them. Research topics are chosen by the pupil and they are also responsible for the progress and success of the project. Glenalmond College's close alliance with the *Education-Research Partnership*, an organisation that links talented pupils in schools with academic scholars and commercial researchers, allows us to provide every opportunity for pupils to engage in research at the very highest level.

Many Scholars and Exhibitioners are entered into the **Oxbridge preparation programme**. This commences in Lower Sixth Form and is designed to prepare pupils for the specific application requirements for courses at elite academic institutions, including Oxford and Cambridge, and for specialist undergraduate courses, such as medicine, dentistry, law and veterinary science.

Upper Sixth Programme

The final year of the WBS Thinking Series programme is entitled ‘**An Introduction to Big Concept Thinking**’. This is dedicated to presenting some of academia’s big conceptual challenges; those that bridge the Arts-Science divide and that require sophisticated philosophical and analytical skills. These include analysis of human rights, societal structure and anarchy, inductive logic and scientific refutation, philosophical reductionism and the nature and value of perceptual art. All seminars and discussion sessions are preceded by a period of reading and research. Each pupil is provided with source reading material that ranges from Thomas Hobbes, Karl Marx, Richard Feynman to Plato, Nietzsche and Alan Turing.

	WBS Thinking Series	Additional Programmes
Third Form	<p>Academic development programme: Award programme: Pushkin Prize for English; Royal Geographical Society Award; Mathematics Olympiad; Gladstone Historical Essay Award; Linguistics Olympiad; Royal Society of Chemistry Award Taught courses: political theory; macro-economics; anthropology; linguistics; historical source analysis; history of art; Medical science</p>	<p>Literature review and in-house staff mentoring: Termly reading lists of both fiction and non-fiction</p>
Fourth Form	<p>An introduction to knowledge (Part I): Problems and nature of 'knowledge'; Paradox theory; artificial intelligence; Chaos theory; fractal universe theory; epistemological analysis; the nature of mathematic and scientific knowledge; non-inductive forms of knowledge</p>	<p>Long-term academic planning: WBS staff support pupils in developing academic specialisms and a more academically expansive approach to study</p>
Fifth Form	<p>An introduction to knowledge (Part II): Human sciences; Historical 'truth'; The truth in the Arts; Ethical and Religious 'Truth'; Theories and Values of truth</p>	
Lower Sixth	<p>An introduction to critical thinking: The critical method to thinking; assessing the criteria for validity; argument construction; philosophical logic and reason; philosophical premise; literature source analysis; scientific and mathematical source analysis</p>	<p>Oxbridge preparation programme: Oxbridge applicants involved in taught courses on generic applicant tests, practice interviews, developing academic portfolios etc Research Projects: pupils involved in independent research qualifications and university link-up</p>
Upper Sixth	<p>An introduction to big concept thinking: The inalienable rights of man; Political structure and the case for anarchy; Induction and the scientific method; Reductionism and materialism; Nationalism versus internationalism; Just war theory; Progressive versus rehabilitative approaches to justice</p>	

WBS Lecture Series

The *WBS Lecture Series* is a programme of lectures, seminars and discussion sessions designed to broaden experience, aspiration and the academic perspective of pupils involved. Lectures are delivered by external speakers and are then followed by discussion and seminar sessions in which pupils discuss the topics and deconstruct the key issues.

A sample from recent terms' Lecture Series programmes:

'Islam and Western Society', by Professor Hugh Goddard

The Director of Edinburgh University's renowned research institute, The Alaweed Centre, offered insight and discussion into the challenges and opportunities of linking Islam and western democratic ideologies

'The Science of Mountain-building', by Dr Hugh Sinclair

A scientific review of cutting edge geological research into the coupling between the processes of Himalayan orogenesis and climatic instability

'US Politics and the Presidential Race", by Alex Massie

Political commentator for the Spectator, Alex Massie, reviewed the Republican-Democrat positions and the political future in the US as the nation's demographic profile continues to change

'Theology, Literature and the Arts', by Professor David Jasper

Professor of Literature and Theology at Glasgow University, David Jasper, reviewed and discussed the linkage between understanding theology through painting and writing throughout history

'The Ethics of Investment Banking', by John Reynolds

A contemporary and topical exploration into the meaning of 'ethics' in investment banking and the capital markets by a renowned author and economist

Pupil perspective

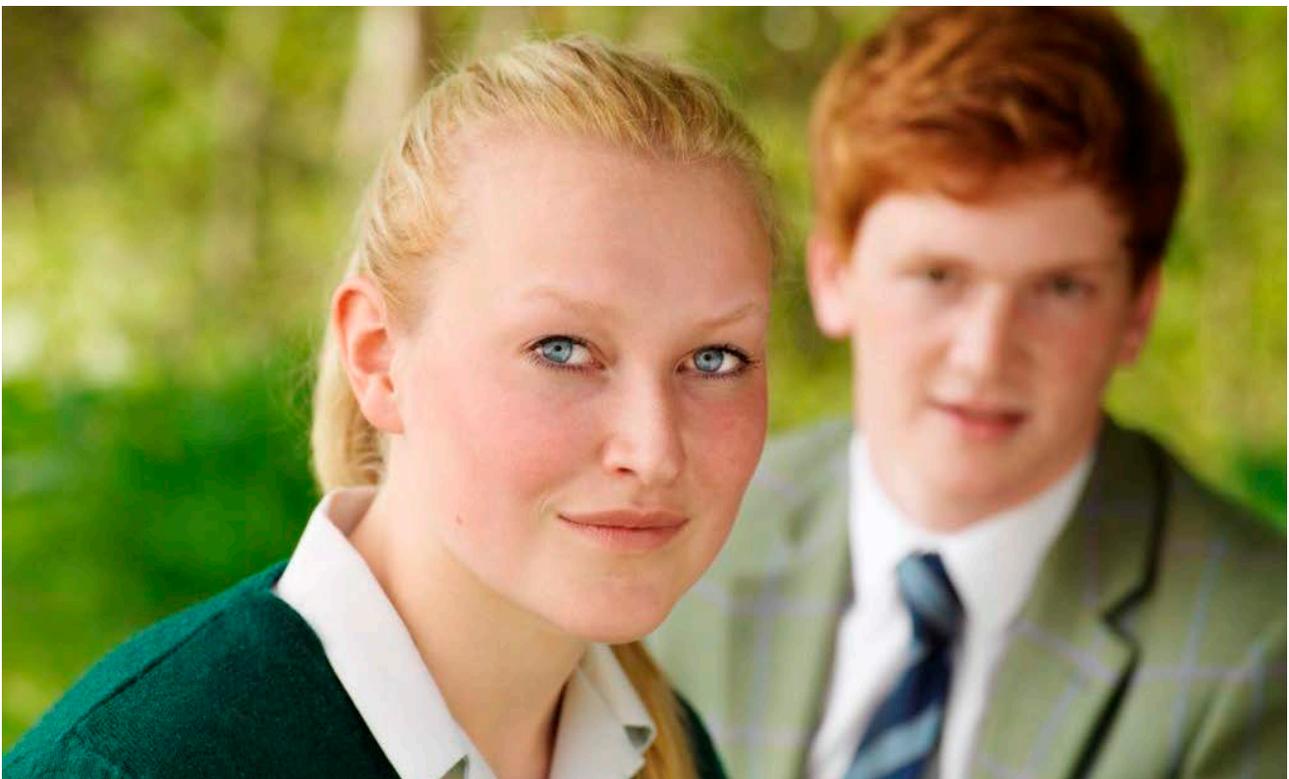
“I love the variation from week to week in the WBS – the intellectually challenging things we look at and how we are constantly forced to challenge our beliefs, forcing us to think outside our comfort zone”

“I genuinely look forward to each WBS session. The quality of discussion, the ability to debate these subjects in detail for extended periods, and to hear all manner of viewpoints is just fantastic...I want to keep my WBS notes for a long time”

“The WBS programme this year has been intellectually stimulating and brilliantly challenging”

“The little “intellectual journeys” we go on in WBS are really fun – the enlightening aspect come from the process rather than the destination, as what we discuss invariably has no magic answer”

“I loved the Thinking Series sessions on linguistics...I found them fascinating- I thought figuring out languages by little clues was loads of fun...”



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