

ACADEMIC ENRICHING INSPIRING **PETROC™**

**GUIDE TO A LEVEL COURSES &
THE ACADEMIC ACADEMY:
BARNSTAPLE 2012/13**

**100%
PASS
RATES***



WHAT ARE YOU LOOKING FOR?

Qualifications. Inspiration. Opportunities.

Petroc in Barnstaple offers all of that and more, including the area's widest range of high quality A Level courses and caring, supportive environments to study and achieve in.

Leaving school is a big step and Petroc is the perfect place to get ready for university, develop your academic skills and discover different perspectives on life.

We're all about giving you the time, space and resources to see things clearer, and helping identify what you want to do and why. We're here to help you be the best you can be, at whatever you choose to do.

From A Levels, to a world of opportunities beyond the classroom

WHATEVER YOU'RE LOOKING FOR, THE ADVENTURE STARTS HERE.

Cover model - Petroc A Level student Alice O'Grady

WELCOME TO PETROC IN BARNSTAPLE

Petroc is Devon's leading provider of education for school leavers.

My team's focus is on providing high quality academic courses that meet the needs of our students and exceed their expectations.

And that's where you come in.

Our students' A Level results are the best in the area. If you're ready to work hard, we can take you to excellence in two years flat. If you're already one of the brightest and best, with your sights set on a top university, we'll make sure you get there with our Academic Academy. You can find out more about the courses we offer and the Academy in this guide.

On top of all that, the College is a great place to be. Petroc has two main campuses in Barnstaple, along with some specialist training facilities, in and around the town.

The main Barnstaple Campus is on top of Sticklepath Hill, with incredible views over the River Taw, town centre and surrounding countryside. It's developed a lot since the college first opened in the 1950s and the buildings are a varied mixture of styles from every decade since then. The consistent things about all of them are the supportive environments, excellent teaching and high quality facilities – including refurbished classrooms, laboratories and workshops – that you'll find inside.

Our Brannams Campus, at Roundswell, is an exciting transformation of the town's old pottery factory into our centre for the creative industries, including performance and gallery spaces.

Wherever you study, everyone at Petroc in Barnstaple is here to help you succeed in your A Levels.

I hope to see you soon.



Keith Devine

Keith Devine
Head of School of
Humanities and Science

**WHEREVER YOU
WANT TO GO
WE'LL GET
YOU THERE**



HIGHER EDUCATION

A LEVELS

**BTEC SUBSIDIARY & EXTENDED DIPLOMAS
ADVANCED APPRENTICESHIPS
AND/OR NVQ 3
ACCESS**

**GCSES
CERTIFICATES & DIPLOMAS
FOUNDATION APPRENTICESHIPS AND/OR NVQ 2**

**DIPLOMA
FOUNDATION LEARNING TIER
NATIONAL VOCATIONAL QUALIFICATIONS (NVQ 1)**

A LEVELS EXPLAINED

A (Advanced) Levels are academic qualifications that focus on traditional study skills. They sit at Level 3 on the National Qualifications Framework - see the 'learning ladder', opposite, which shows how different types of qualifications compare, in terms of the demands they place on learners. To secure a place in Petroc's Academy (for more information see page 24), you'll need seven A grades including two A* grades at GCSE.

A Levels normally take two years to complete, full time. They are split into the AS (Advanced Subsidiary – a qualification in its own right) and A2, which each make up 50% of the overall A Level grade.

Most students choose four subjects to study in their first year, then concentrate on three subjects in their second year, achieving three A Levels and an AS Level. But you can take as many as five A Levels, if you're up to the challenge.

At Petroc, we recommend that you have achieved at least five GCSEs at grade C or above to embark on an A Level programme.

Grades

A Level results are graded A* - E. The results are announced in August and March.

UCAS points

If you're applying to university or college for a Higher Education course, A and AS Levels earn the following points in the 'UCAS Tariff':

GRADE	A LEVEL	AS LEVEL
A*	140	N/A
A	120	60
B	100	50
C	80	40
D	60	30
E	40	20

YOUR GUIDE TO GETTING INTO THE BEST UNIVERSITIES

It pays to think ahead – especially if you want your degree to come from one of Britain's top universities, like Oxford, Cambridge or Warwick.

The choices you make now will affect your chances of success and Petroc offers a range of A Level courses, with a focus on the core subjects our students need to prepare them for university.

High grades are essential but the right choices and combinations of subjects are just as important, so we've spoken to Britain's leading universities to find out what they are looking for in potential undergraduates.

WHICH A LEVEL SUBJECTS SHOULD I CHOOSE?

Universities broadly group their degree courses into two groups: Arts (including Humanities and Social Sciences) and Sciences (including Mathematics).

If you don't know which route you want to take, choose a combination of AS and A2 subjects that keep your options open. We offer the nine A Levels considered core subjects by top universities:

English
Mathematics
Further Mathematics
History
French, German and/or Spanish
Geography
Chemistry
Physics
Biology

We also offer a number of other A and AS Level subjects – some of which are essential for specialist courses or may be useful to your future career.

As well as choosing subjects that you enjoy and are good at, check university prospectuses and websites to see the subjects they're looking for.

If you're focusing on the arts, sociology, law and classics are just some of the courses you might wish to take alongside the core subjects such as english, history, languages and mathematics.

For the sciences, our biology, chemistry,

physics and maths A Levels are the core, with further mathematics also essential for some degrees. You should choose at least two, or ideally three of these A Level subjects and bear in mind that top universities often expect candidates to have studied four of them.

FIND OUT MORE

University prospectuses and websites give further information on degree courses, entry requirements and recommended A Level choices.

Petroc also offers a range of high quality Foundation Degrees in Barnstaple, through our partnership with Plymouth University.

All the information you need can be found in the Learning Resources Centre at the main Barnstaple Campus.

An impartial guide to Britain's top universities is published by The Guardian every year and the latest league tables can be viewed on the newspaper's website:

www.guardian.co.uk

ARTS

All of these subjects explore what it is to be human. This could mean exploring how art, literature, language and ideas have shaped our world, learning more about the systems that govern our way of life, finding out more about how the past has created the present, or understanding how we shape our environment.

Whichever subjects interest you, all of our students enjoy grappling with what makes us who we are and what makes us tick. They enjoy discussion and debate, challenging ideas and coming to their own conclusions.

Studying any of these subjects will strengthen your ability to analyse, communicate and work with others and it will give you a wide range of transferable skills which are highly valued by universities and employers.

Jill Hiscox,

Deputy Head of School / Lecturer in English



- Accountancy**
- Art & Design (Graphic Design)**
- Art & Design (Photography)**
- Art, Design & Craft**
- Classical Civilisation**
- Critical Thinking**
- Economics & Business**
- English Literature**
- English Language**
- English Language & Literature**
- French**
- Geography**
- German**
- Government & Politics**
- History**
- Law**
- Media Studies**
- Philosophy of Religion**
- Sociology**
- Spanish**
- Sport & Physical Education**

SABINE SHARP

As a member of our Academic Academy, Sabine had support with her university applications, as well as additional input from lecturers and tutors.

She was offered places studying English Literature and German at Liverpool, Sheffield, Swansea and Southampton – all part of the Russell Group, which represents the UK's top 20 universities.

Following her outstanding A Level results, the former Holsworthy Community College pupil has gone to Sheffield University.

And, before she left North Devon for South Yorkshire, Sabine spoke to us about her time at Petroc.

"I've had lots of support from my lecturer, Phil Lively-Masters, looking at interview techniques," she said.

"If I ever had a problem I could always ask my lecturers for help.

"Everyone was so wonderfully helpful and I've met so many brilliant new people; even in the second year I was still making new friends. You really don't get to meet so many people in so many different circumstances anywhere but at college.

"With an English Literature and German degree I can go to any English or German speaking country or pick up a new language. Long term I want to get into something to do with travel and reading, so maybe editing or publishing."





SCIENCES



We expand knowledge by gathering evidence, suggesting solutions and testing them through experimentation but maths and sciences at Petroc are so much more than that.

These subjects are all about finding logical, rational ways to understand and explain the world around us. Throughout history, from the ancient Greeks to our information age and whatever the future has in store for us, these subjects are at the heart of human progress and development.

Study and investigate a universe of possibilities; mathematical certainties, the complex uncertainty of quantum physics, the unpredictability of human behaviour, or the future of our planet. Discover theories and ideas that we knew nothing about when your parents were at school.

Petroc is the STEM Regional Centre for the South West which means that we have been recognised for our excellence in Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths. So, whether you're interested in scientific ideas, hypotheses and concepts, the practical application of theory or a combination of these, my team will inspire, enthral and amaze you every day.

Keith Devine,
Head of School / Lecturer in Chemistry

Biology
Chemistry
Engineering
Environmental Studies
**Information & Communication
Technology (ICT)**
Mathematics
Further Mathematics
Physics
Psychology

MATTHEW HUXTABLE

Matthew chose to study A Levels at Petroc and sign up for the Academic Academy because he wanted the best possible, mind-stretching learning experience.

"I deliberately picked Physics, Chemistry, Maths and Further Maths so I would be challenged," he told us.

"By far the most challenging was Further Mathematics, a brilliant subject that is exclusive to Petroc in this area and the reason I came."

The former Pilton Community College pupil is now studying Natural Sciences at Cambridge, after gaining four A* grades at A Level in summer 2011.

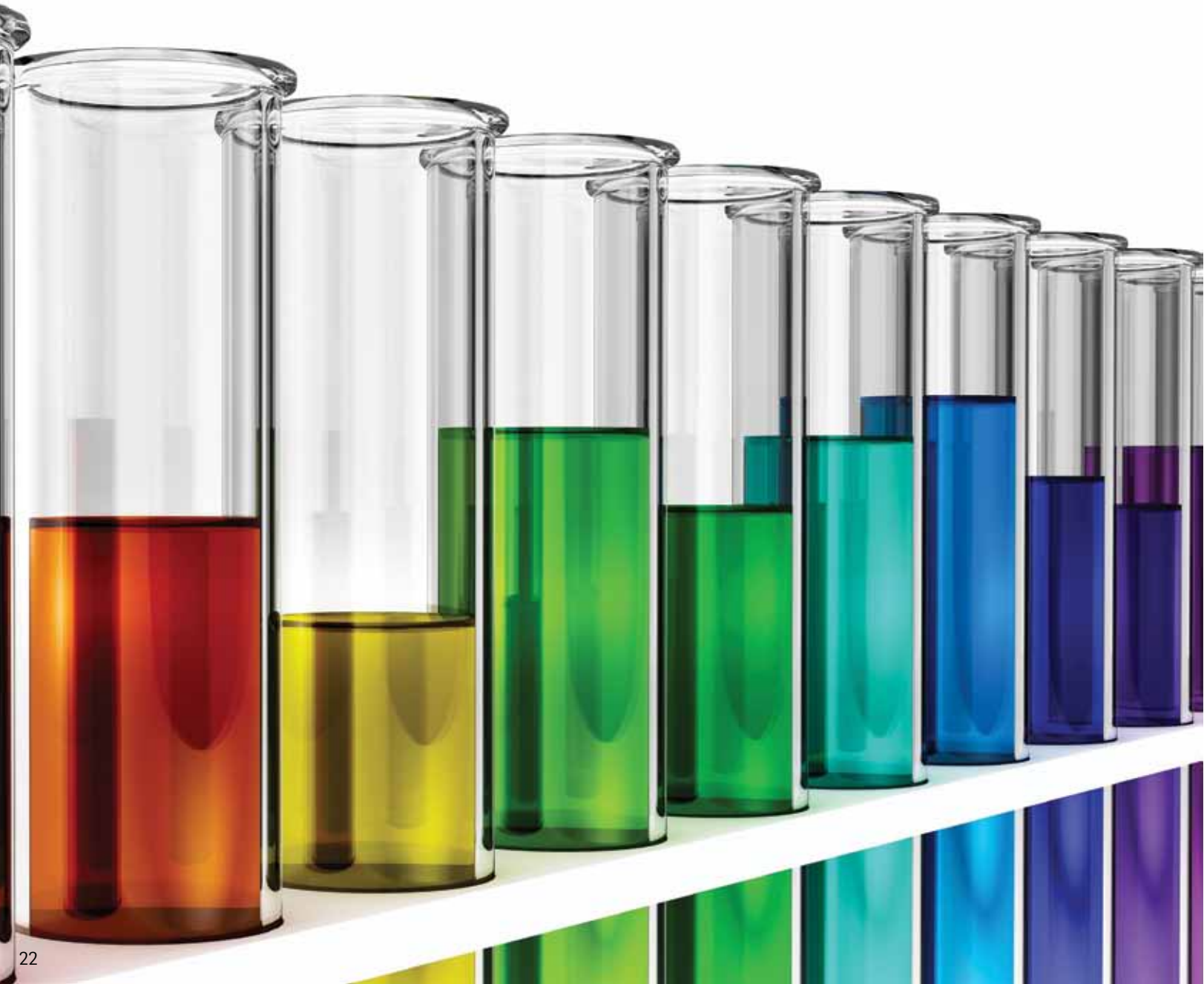
Matthew was put up a year at school, because his academic ability was beyond his years. As a result, he began Petroc a year earlier than most students and was initially worried he wouldn't be ready for the social side of college.

"I knew the academic side wouldn't be a problem but I was worried about meeting people and being happy," he said.

But being part of the Academic Academy and joining the team at Fresh FM – Petroc's student radio station – put paid to any fears and Matthew made many friends while he was at College.

"My advice to anyone would be to choose the classes you really want, not the classes your friends are in," he added. "You meet like-minded people and get on well."





STEM

Petroc is proud to be the Government's lead college for Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths (STEM) subjects in the South West region.

We are recognised as a centre of excellence by the Learning and Skills Improvement Service (LSIS).

STEM is all about making the UK world leaders in research and development, maintaining our country's competitiveness and providing businesses with the skilled workforce they need.

The College hosts regular events in Barnstaple and around the region, which draw academics from the country's top universities and professionals from major businesses.

These exciting events include inspirational lectures, practical demonstrations and hands-on experiments. They provide teachers and students – often including pupils from schools close to Petroc – with the opportunity to experience the cutting edge of these vital subjects.

With its state of the art laboratories, modern facilities and outstanding teachers, Petroc's Barnstaple Campus is a great place to study STEM subjects.

THE RIGHT COURSE FOR YOU

Everything we do is aimed at giving you the best possible learning and life experience, with the highest quality teaching, resources and facilities.

To find out more about Petroc, call us on 01271 338125, visit our website: www.petroc.ac.uk or come and see what we offer at one of our information, advice and guidance events at our Barnstaple Campus, where you can meet the team and have a look around the College.

INFORMATION, ADVICE AND GUIDANCE EVENTS:

**Wednesday November 16 2011,
3.30 to 7.30pm**

**Wednesday November 17 2011,
5.00 to 8.00pm**

**Wednesday January 18 2012,
3.30 to 7.30pm**

APPLICATION

You can apply online at www.petroc.ac.uk from October 2011* and you'll receive confirmation of your application via e-mail. If you need any help with your application, come in and see us, or call the Guidance Centre on 01271 338125. We always encourage students to apply by the end of January, to guarantee places on the courses you want but if you haven't made a final decision by then, you can apply at a later date.

INTERVIEW

Soon after we confirm your application, we'll send you a letter inviting you to interview. It's nothing to worry about; just a chance for us to get to know more about you and your learning needs, and a chance for you to find out more about life at Petroc and your chosen course.

If you can't make the date or time we ask you to come in for your interview, let us know and we'll arrange a more convenient appointment.

OFFER

Following your interview, you will receive a letter offering you a place at Petroc. It'll specify any agreed conditions, such as the exam grades you need and the subjects required (eg five GCSEs at grade C or above, including English and Maths, for most A Level courses.)

*Paper copies of our application form are available if you don't have internet access.

UPDATES

Once you've accepted your offer of a place at college, we'll send you regular updates and reminders, by e-mail and in the post; from book lists and summer homework (for some subjects) to newsletters and details of your induction days. You can also keep track of what's going on at Petroc online, via our website www.petroc.ac.uk, Facebook page (search for 'Petroc Official'), Twitter and YouTube.

INDUCTION

You'll learn even more about Petroc and what we have to offer at your induction days, when you start college, in September 2012. As well as meeting your personal tutor and tutor group, you'll find your way around and start settling in.

INTERACTION

Interact with us, tell us what you think, ask us questions, browse your courses, find out more...

Scan this with your smartphone:



THE ACADEMIC ACADEMY

Are you hoping to go to a top university and aiming for a high flying career? Do you want to stretch yourself as far as you can and enjoy an academic challenge?

Petroc's Academic Academy is a specialised tutor group for students who achieve seven or more GCSEs at grade A or A*. The A Level pass rate for Academy students is 100% and last year they achieved an outstanding 67% of grades at A* to A.

The Academy is designed to provide you with the opportunity to enhance your analytical and evaluative skills; both written and oral. Tutors encourage and support you with applications into top universities, such as Oxford and Cambridge, and highly competitive courses, such as medicine, veterinary science, law and engineering and dentistry.

All Academy students study critical thinking as a fifth A Level. You will also undertake an extended project based on your own interests - this project is highly valued by top universities.

If you want to be successful in your studies, look no further. Petroc offers all the A Level subjects you need to progress to Higher Education and a first class degree. Our students' results are the best in the area and the College is recognised as the South West regional lead for STEM subjects (Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths – see page 23).

To sign up for a chance to be part of the Academic Academy, just tick the relevant box on your online application form. We can then discuss your suitability at interview.

In the meantime, if you'd like to discuss your A Level options and how our Academic Academy can help you realise your ambitions, contact our admin team on 01271 338012 and they will arrange for one of our lecturers to call you for a chat.

WHAT PETROC'S ACADEMIC ACADEMY GIVES YOU:

- An additional two hours teaching a week to sharpen up your critical thinking skills and give you an additional AS Level.
- One to one support to guide you through an extended project
- Specialist support and guidance on applying to Oxford, Cambridge and Russell Group Universities
- Expert help in gaining entry to highly competitive courses such as medicine, law, dentistry and veterinary science
- A programme of visits and speakers to assist your Higher Education applications
- Participation in a tutor group of lively, like-minded students.



SUPPORTING YOUR STUDIES

Petroc has learning resource centres with materials, equipment and staff to help you. Our library offers a wide ranging stock of books, periodicals and CD-ROM facilities, as well as a team of helpful staff.

Petroc welcomes applications from everyone and we will help you succeed.

When additional needs are identified, learning support is available, including specialist help for people with specific learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Your tutor and your lecturers will help with study skills and refer you to other sources of help.

We also offer the opportunity to upgrade your numeracy, language and literacy skills through a range of courses and qualifications.

For further information please contact our Guidance Centre on 01271 338125

CAREERS

During your time at Petroc, we will encourage you to think about your future. Your tutor will hold regular one to one reviews with you to help you produce an Individual Action Plan. Our Guidance Centre has a very large stock of books, prospectuses and computer-based materials to help you plan your next steps. There is also a comprehensive programme of visiting speakers and careers events. Petroc works closely with Careers South West and personal advisors are available for one to one interviews.

FINANCIAL HELP

If you need help with money to pay for things like specialist equipment or childcare, we may be able to help, via the Bursary Fund or Adult Learner Support Fund. Further details are available from the Guidance Centre.

TRANSPORT

Travel to and from Petroc is provided by Devon Local Education Authority (LEA), as long as you live within our designated area, attend college full time, are aged under 19 and live more than three miles from our main campus.

If you live in the catchment area of Ilfracombe or Bideford Colleges and want to study A Levels with us, you may not be entitled to LEA support but we can arrange transport for you. Please consider all your options before purchasing a bus pass; the most cost effective method may be purchasing your bus pass directly

from the bus company, see the College website for details. You may be entitled to assistance with your transport costs from the Adult Learner Support Fund.

ACCOMMODATION

If you live too far from Petroc to travel home every day, we can help you find accommodation. Our Guidance Centre will refer you to our Student Support Team who can go through your requirements with you, and may be able to help secure appropriate housing.

As a student, you may be able to get help from the Government, in the form of Housing Benefit. Much will depend on your age and circumstances. Our support team can advise you.

CHILDCARE

The Government runs a childcare support scheme for students under the age of 19, called 'Care to Learn', which is designed to allow young learners with children the opportunity to continue their studies.

EXAM RESULTS

A Levels

Subject	% Pass	% High Grades A*-C
Accountancy	100%	46%
Additional Further Mathematics	100%	100%
Applied Engineering	89%	44%
Art & Design	100%	96%
Biology	97%	79%
Chemistry	100%	78%
Classical Civilisation	100%	91%
Critical Thinking	100%	47%
Design Technology	100%	33%
Economics & Business Studies	100%	57%
Electronics	100%	75%
English Language	100%	73%
English Language & Literature	100%	69%
English Literature	100%	92%
Environmental Studies	94%	43%
Film Studies	100%	83%
French	100%	88%
Fine Art	100%	100%
Further Mathematics	100%	100%
Geography	100%	79%
German	100%	78%
Government & Politics	100%	71%
Graphic Design	100%	79%
History	100%	86%
ICT	100%	67%
Italian	100%	100%
Law	100%	81%
Mathematics	100%	79%
Media Studies	100%	88%
Photography	100%	77%
Physics	95%	61%
Psychology	97%	77%
Philosophy of Religion	94%	56%
Sociology	100%	78%
Spanish	100%	71%
Sport & Physical Education	100%	69%

ACADEMY STUDENTS ACHIEVED 100% PASS RATES IN ALL SUBJECTS

21% ACHIEVED A* • 67% ACHIEVED A*/A • 92% ACHIEVED A*/B

A LEVEL AWARD WINNERS 2011

Subject	Student	Previous School
Accountancy	Amy Shelton	Park
Art, Craft & Design	Ruby Hudson	Bideford
Biology	Tomas Binns	Park
Chemistry	Rebecca Fowler	Braunton
Classical Civilisation	Samuel Baker	Park
Critical Thinking	Katie Shapland	Park
Design Technology	Jamie Bennett	Torrington
Economics & Business	Emma Horton	Pilton
Electronics	Jack Cawthorne	Pilton
Engineering	Cameron Maddocks	Braunton
English Language	Marianne Brooker	The Greys School, Essex
English Language & Literature	Aydan Greatrick	Braunton
English Literature	Elizabeth Howlett	Ilfracombe
Environmental Studies	Sian Green	Holsworthy
Film Studies	Miranda Mooring	Ilfracombe
French	Phoebe Bitmead-Hill	Park
Further Maths	Ben Wormleighton	Braunton
Geography	Thomas Bell	Pilton
German	Catherine Sankey	Pilton
Government & Politics	Jodie Barrow	Pilton
Graphics	Raymond Clarke	Park
Health & Social Care	Stephanie Rees	Pilton
History	Sam Armstrong	Bideford
Law	Tasmin Bidgway	Torrington
Maths	Sabine Sharp	Holsworthy
Media Production	Marcus Lywood	Braunton
Media Studies	Grace Johnson	Park
Performing Arts (Acting)	Sophie Pearce	Pilton
Performing Arts (Dance)	Jazmine Moast	Torrington
Performing Arts (Musical)	Joan Stater	Park
Photography	Jocasta Nicholson	
Physics	Matthew Huxtable	Pilton
Psychology	Megan Downing	Bideford
Religious Studies	Clare Kelly	Park
Sociology	Rebecca Rowland	The Grove School, London
Spanish	Caspian Merlin	Pilton
Sport & Physical Education	Matthew Brock	Bideford



www.petroc.ac.uk

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www.petroc.ac.uk

*100% A Level pass rates for majority of A Level subjects, summer 2011.
Petroc's Academic Academy students achieved a 100% pass rate.

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