



MAGDALEN  
COLLEGE SCHOOL

SCHOLARSHIPS AND AWARDS AT 13+

2026/2027





# MAGDALEN COLLEGE SCHOOL

## Scholarship dates, 2026-2027

Monday 9 <sup>th</sup> November 2026	Application deadline for 13+ Sports Scholarships
Friday 4 <sup>th</sup> December 2026	13+ Sports Scholarship Assessments Application deadline for 13+ Music Scholarships
Friday 8 <sup>th</sup> January 2027	Applications deadline for Academic Scholarships and 13+ Art Scholarships
Week commencing 25 <sup>th</sup> January 2027	13+ Music Scholarship Auditions
Tuesday 23 <sup>rd</sup> February 2027	Academic Scholarship Examinations
Monday 1 <sup>st</sup> March 2027	13+ Art Scholarship portfolios to be submitted by 8.30am (collection between 4pm and 5pm on Friday 5 <sup>th</sup> March)
Thursday 18 <sup>th</sup> March 2027	13+ Art Scholarship Interviews from 4.00pm

### FURTHER INFORMATION

Further information can also be found on our website (along with specimen papers):  
[www.mcsoxford.org/scholarships](http://www.mcsoxford.org/scholarships). If you have any questions, please email  
[registrar@mcsoxford.org](mailto:registrar@mcsoxford.org) or call 01865 253430.

# Academic Scholarships

FOR ENTRY INTO YEAR 9 IN SEPTEMBER 2027

The Academic Scholarship Examinations will be held on Tuesday 23<sup>rd</sup> February 2027. Scholarships are honorary in nature and do not carry a financial benefit

Candidates must be under fourteen years of age on 1<sup>st</sup> September 2027. A scholar will hold his award as long as he remains at the school, provided that his progress and behaviour continue to impress.

We will send an online application form to all offer-holders by email and the form can also be found here: [www.mcsoxford.org/scholarships](http://www.mcsoxford.org/scholarships).

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All Academic Scholarship candidates will take five papers and have a short 20-minute interview.

## ENGLISH PAPER (1½ hours)

The examination will consist of one reading exercise (testing comprehension, inference and analysis) and one piece of original writing (composition). The text for the reading exercise may be a poem or an extract of fiction or non-fiction prose.

Examples of aspects of the writing that candidates may be asked to trace or comment upon include:

- atmosphere or setting
- characterisation
- the way a character's attitude, feelings or emotions are presented
- our first impressions of a character or setting
- analysis of the effects of literary devices such as simile, metaphor, repetition or listing
- use of dialogue
- particular choices of language or sentencing
- where appropriate, aspects of tone such as humour.

Questions testing basic comprehension and requiring candidates to summarise elements of the passage may also be set, and some questions may require an independent, personal response. There will be a choice of subjects for the composition, including imaginative and discursive writing. Spelling, punctuation and presentation will be taken into account.

## MATHEMATICS PAPER (1 hour)

The paper will consist of questions on basic techniques as well as more challenging questions. The syllabus for this paper will be all the content from the 13+ Core papers, and the following topics from the 13+ Additional paper: Pythagoras' theorem, further algebra, reverse percentages, HCF and LCM, significant figures.

Questions may also be set which do not reflect any particular topic from the syllabus but are self-explanatory and complete in themselves. It is hoped that such questions will enable candidates with genuine flair for the subject to demonstrate it.

Candidates may attempt as many questions as they can in the time.

Calculators may be used, but questions will generally require evidence of a non-calculator method.

## LANGUAGE PAPER (30 minutes)

Candidates will be asked to answer one section on a language of their choice, from the following options: French, German, Spanish, Latin or Greek. They will be given a short time to read the questions before making a choice. Dictionaries will not be allowed during any part of the examinations.

Details of the types of questions for each language are given below.

## French

Candidates should expect to answer questions on the following:

- Possessive adjectives (*mon, ma, mes*, etc.)
- The present tense of regular and irregular verbs
- Adjectival agreement (regular and irregular forms)
- Negative sentences involving *ne* and *pas* (and impact on indefinite articles)
- Rewriting singular sentences as plural sentences (and vice versa)
- Responding in English to a text in French (candidates should be able to recognise a variety of tenses in this section). The texts will be related to the following topics: holidays and tourism, transport and travel.

## German

The examination consists of two sections, A and B:

Section A (20min) consists of a writing exercise, typically a guided letter of 50-80 words, relating to topics within candidates' personal experience (e.g. home, family, school, leisure activities, holidays).

Section B (10min) consists of a translation section where candidates are asked to translate brief sentences into the target language.

## Greek

- A. A series of grammar questions
- B. Some Greek into English sentences
- C. A prose passage for unseen translation or comprehension

The paper gains in difficulty as it goes: all candidates should work through from the beginning and attempt as much of the paper as they can manage. Vocabulary is taken from the ISEB Classics Syllabus, Levels 1 and 2. Grammar and syntax follows Wilding, *Greek for Beginners*, up to and including Chapter 20. Knowledge of the Aorist Passive is not expected, and all participles in the translation passage will be glossed.

## Latin

Grammar, syntax and vocabulary will be as prescribed for Scholarship level in the ISEB Classics Syllabus. Two prose passages will be set, each of 12–15 lines, one for unseen translation and one for comprehension. All the comprehension questions are designed to test understanding and interpretation of the piece. Six English sentences for translation *into* Latin are set as an alternative to the comprehension.

## Spanish

The examination consists of two sections, A and B:

Section A (20min) consists of a writing exercise, typically a guided letter of 50-80 words, relating to topics within candidates' personal experience (e.g. home, family, school, leisure activities, holidays).

Section B (10min) consists of a translation section where candidates are asked to translate brief sentences into the target language.

## GENERAL PAPER (30 minutes)

Candidates will be asked to answer one question on a subject of their choice from the options below. They will be given a short time to read the questions before making a choice.

### Geography

Questions will be drawn from a range of contemporary geographical issues and will require the ability to hold a point of view and weigh up an argument. Candidates should have a grounding in

the key concepts of place, scale, space, interdependence and human and physical processes supported by relevant exemplar material.

Questions may be drawn from subject areas such as:

- environmental pressures, climate change and sustainability
- hazards and processes, including atmospheric and geomorphological
- global development and inequality
- the future of food and contemporary farming
- urban challenges
- global connections, trade and migration

## History

There is no formal History syllabus.

Questions will for the most part lend themselves to illustration from any period or periods. Both the ability to generate a range of argument (and counter-argument) and precision in the use of examples will be rewarded. Candidates are encouraged to include examples from the periods of history that they have already studied.

## Theology

There is no formal Theology syllabus.

Questions will require candidates to construct a balanced and reasoned argument, showing awareness of key religious, philosophical and moral themes. Independent thought and the judicious use of well-chosen illustrations and examples will be rewarded.

## SCIENCE PAPER (30 minutes)

Candidates will be asked to answer one question on either Biology, Chemistry or Physics (there will be two options for each subject). They will be given a short time to read the questions before making a choice.

The questions will test the understanding of scientific principles and their applications, ranging from the theoretical (understanding formulae, and balancing and writing equations) to the practical (including the use of standard laboratory apparatus and techniques) as well as knowledge and understanding of concepts studied.

For Biology, questions could consider cell structure and hierarchy of organisation, biological molecules, aspects of physiology (including gas exchange, circulation, movement and reproduction), photosynthesis and respiration, ecology and variation.

For Chemistry, material could be taken from areas such as physical and chemical properties of elements and compounds, acids, alkalis and chemical reactions, testing for common gases, metals and energy changes.

For Physics, questions could explore energy changes and transfers, forces and their effects, density and pressure, vibrations and waves (including light), electricity and electrical circuits, or the nature of the solar system.

## Art Awards

Art at Magdalen College School is vibrant, diverse and fun. All pupils are given the opportunity to discover and stimulate their creative ability and are taught in small groups by Art specialists in an atmosphere that is professional and friendly.

The Art Department is situated along the length of the top floor of the Michael Peagram Building. It consists of four studios that have floor-to-ceiling windows and skylights, designed for a wide range of two and three-dimensional work. These are supported by a computer suite and a well-equipped photographic darkroom. The department also shares facilities with Design and Technology, which houses a kiln and spray-painting booth, as well as woodworking machinery. Our students have the very best facilities to pursue any artistic activity they wish. As well as our own library, we are supported by an excellent Art and Design collection in the school's Sir Basil Blackwell Library.



The department is open to serious users, outside of lessons, allowing pupils to come in and work on Art during breaks, lunchtimes or after school. Lower School artists are welcome to join the Art Clubs, which meet on a weekly basis. There is also a Photography Club and annual drawing and photography competitions. Pupils are also encouraged to submit their own work to several prestigious Art competitions annually including the Big Draw; and the Royal Academy of Arts.

Art Scholars also have their own group, which develops higher-profile projects over the course of a year while allowing the youngest Scholars to work alongside those in the Upper Sixth. The department benefits from an 'artist-in-residence' programme, which affords opportunities for award-holders to work in a professional setting, and exhibit locally, through our partnership with Magdalen Road Studios.



An exhibition space runs the length of the department in which we display work as it is produced; artwork is also displayed around the school site. The academic year culminates in the Summer Exhibition, open to friends and family; staff and governors as well as selected VIPs. Most year groups will experience a trip or workshop each year.

MCS offers Art Scholarships to pupils entering the Lower Fourth and Lower Sixth. Scholarships are honorary in nature and do not carry a financial benefit. For financial assistance with fees, please look at our means-tested [Bursary scheme](#).

It is expected that all those awarded a Scholarship at 13+ will take GCSE Art. Awards are tenable for as long as the holder continues to study the subject.

### How to apply

If a pupil would like to be considered for an award, he will be required to submit a portfolio which covers a range of processes and techniques. Work should have been done over the past two years. Enthusiasm, imagination and technical competence will all be considered, although candidates are judged on artistic potential as well as on previous attainment.



Pupils at 13+ must apply by **Friday 8<sup>th</sup> January 2027**.

They must then submit their portfolios by 8.30am on **Monday 1<sup>st</sup> March 2027**. Portfolios should contain 6-10 pieces of work, including at least one piece of work from direct observation; one piece from imagination; one piece based on a favourite artist's work; and anything else they might like to show us. The portfolios should then be collected between 4.00 and 5.00pm on **Friday 5<sup>th</sup> March**.

Our Head of Art assess the portfolios and will select a 'short-list' of candidates who will be invited to attend the Scholarship Interview which is on **Thursday 18<sup>th</sup> March 2027** for 13+ candidates. Candidates will be asked to complete a mini project at home (three hours) during the preceding weekend, to bring with them to interview. They will also have the opportunity to discuss their work and their particular artistic interests. We look forward to meeting them.

# Music Awards

With its collegiate connections, MCS has a long tradition of nurturing musicians and music-making of a very high standard. Music is regarded as an important aspect of the school's life. Whether or not they are specialist musicians, large numbers of pupils are involved in some way in the Music Department's activities.

Whilst at MCS, pupils have been members of the National Youth Orchestra, National Children's Orchestra, National Youth Choirs of Great Britain, National Youth Music Theatre, Pro Corda and have distinguished themselves in the BBC Young Musician of the Year competition.

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The Director of Music leads a team of five full-time teaching staff (including the Head of Instrumental Music and Head of Music Production), a part-time teacher of music, an accompanist and performance coach, an administrator, an intern, and forty-three visiting instrumental teachers. Academic music is very strong: over the past three years virtually all candidates have achieved an A\* or A at GCSE and A level. Pupils regularly proceed to Oxford and Cambridge and other leading universities to read music, and many have been awarded choral or organ scholarships.

The Senior School has two symphony orchestras, two jazz bands, a wind band, two string orchestras, three choirs, close harmony groups and numerous chamber ensembles, including string quartets, piano trios, guitar, 'cello, wind, brass and percussion ensembles.

There are many concerts held during the course of the school year. There are regular formal and informal concerts showcasing both ensemble and solo items. Concerts are given each year in SJE Arts, The Sheldonian Theatre, Magdalen College Chapel and in various other venues across the city. In March, the Sheldonian Concert features the work of the Symphony Orchestra, Choral Society and MCS Chorus. In 2023, the Symphony Orchestra, choirs and whole school performed a Coronation Concert in Birmingham Symphony Hall. The school year ends with an Arts Festival which includes the atmospheric Madrigals on the River sung from punts moored at the end of School Field.

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Music Scholars are important members of the school and will be leaders to other pupils. We expect them not only to play to a high standard, but to set an example to others. They should be committed to performing regularly in the department's ensembles as well as performing solos in the chamber concerts. In return we will seek to stretch and stimulate them to achieve their goals.

## How to apply

MCS offers a number of music awards to boys entering the Lower Fourth Form (Year 9) at age 13. Candidates must be under the age of 14 on 1st September in the year of entry. We advise that candidates should be at least Grade 6 standard, ideally having achieved **Grade 5 Distinction** on the practical exam for one or more instruments as the minimum for application for the scholarship.

Music Scholarships carry with them free tuition in one instrument (currently worth £1,431 per annum). Awards of free tuition are also made to other deserving candidates. Additional sums may be available on completion of a means-tested bursary form.

Candidates are judged as much upon musical potential as they are upon attainment. Each is perceived as a unique individual, and a specific musical profile is not a prerequisite to success in the auditions.

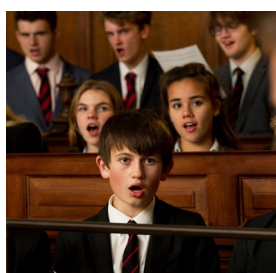
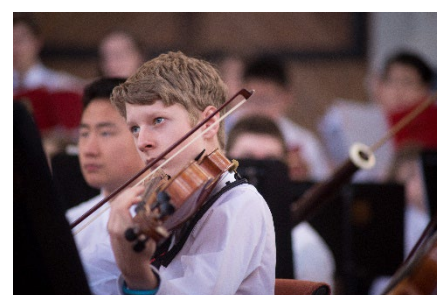
Music Scholarship auditions for boys entering the Lower Fourth Form in September 2027 will take place in the week commencing Monday 25<sup>th</sup> January 2027. The closing date for entries is Friday 4<sup>th</sup> December 2026.

At the audition, which will last about 40 minutes, candidates will be required to perform:

- **one prepared piece on each of the instruments** that the candidate is offering (including voice if applicable). When choosing a piece, it is always better to choose a piece the candidate knows well and which shows his musicality, rather than attempt a harder piece which is less comfortably known. If the candidate is only offering one instrument then two contrasting pieces should be performed. The school will provide an accompanist for the candidates if required and there will be time to rehearse before the audition.
- sight-reading on the main instrument
- a short piece of unaccompanied sight-singing
- aural tests (melody and rhythm recall, interval pitching and recognition)
- viva voce questions to assess pupils' knowledge of musical theory and to discuss their interests.

Magdalen College School subscribes to a voluntary code of practice with other Oxfordshire-based schools which means that if your son has already accepted a Music Award of any kind at another senior school, he cannot attempt our Music Awards auditions without the written permission of that school.

Parents can contact the Director of Music at any time to discuss their child's potential as a candidate. An informal pre-scholarship interview in the Michaelmas term can sometimes be a useful way for the pupil and his parents to assess the pupil's suitability for a scholarship if he does not have the minimum grade requirement. If you require any further information, please contact the Director of Music, Jon Cullen [jcullen@mcsoxford.org](mailto:jcullen@mcsoxford.org).



# Sports Awards

MCS aims to support applications from boys who believe they have considerable sporting potential and who would thrive on the combination of a first-class academic and sporting education.

Scholarships are honorary in nature and do not carry a financial benefit. For financial assistance with fees, please look at our means-tested [Bursary scheme](#).

## Sport Scholars require:

- a genuine love of sport
- speed, agility, balance and co-ordination
- a sound understanding of tactical and technical aspects of the game
- a positive attitude to training and open-minded approach to coaching.

## In return, Award holders enjoy:

- top level coaching
- access to strength and conditioning programmes
- use of video analysis
- broad opportunities for a variety of sporting involvement
- a genuine interest in pupil development through individual mentoring.

Candidates will be encouraged to show particular potential in at least one of MCS's Focus Sports. These are: Rugby, Football, Hockey, Cricket and Tennis

It must be emphasised, however, that outstanding expertise in any sphere of sport will be considered. Candidates able to offer ability in a combination of sports are encouraged to apply, as are those who have outstanding potential in one sport.

At 13+ these awards are about potential rather than current performance levels. However, as a guide the following criteria can be used. To have a realistic chance of an award a candidate is likely to be doing one or a combination of the following:

- To be playing in their prep school first team for one of, if not all, focus sports
- To be playing regularly for a county (or higher level) team in one of our focus sports.



## How to apply

Complete the application form (along with a letter of recommendation from the candidate's Head of Sport for external applicants) by **Monday 9<sup>th</sup> November 2026**. Staff in the Sports Department will assess the applications, and will select a 'short-list' of candidates who will be invited to attend the 13+ Sports Assessments, which are on **Friday 4<sup>th</sup> December 2026**, from 9am to 3.30pm.

The Scholarship application form can be found on our website:  
[www.mcsoxford.org/apply-for-a-scholarship](http://www.mcsoxford.org/apply-for-a-scholarship).