



ENGLISH-SPEAKING UNION

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Debate Academy Guide

Introduction from the Course Director

Debate Academy is an annual, week-long summer school in the United Kingdom dedicated to improving young people's debating skills. It is held each year in late July to early August at Uppingham School in Rutland.

Students aged 14-18 receive tuition from expert debating mentors in a variety of competitive debating formats. Whether you have little or no experience, or are getting ready for trials for your national debating team, Debate Academy will offer a tailored experience to suit you.

This document is designed to provide additional information and hopefully to answer any questions you may have about Debate Academy.

For the most up to date information on this year's Debate Academy or to sign up for a place, please visit our website:

<http://www.esu.org/our-work/debate-academy>

If you have any further questions or queries about Debate Academy feel free to get in touch with me at eliot.pallot@esu.org.

I look forward to seeing you there!

Eliot Pallot
Discover Your Voice Officer
English-Speaking Union



International Headquarters: Dartmouth House 37 Charles Street London W1J 5ED +44 (0)20 7529 1550 www.esu.org

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Learning at Debate Academy



Debate Academy offers two different tracks through the week, Mixed Formats and World Schools. Each track is split into separate streams with classes of beginners, intermediates and advanced students.

Each full day students will have six hours of teaching that will consist of a mix of practice debates, skills-oriented exercises and games or focused topic-based seminars tailored to their experience level. Class sizes will be under 20 to maximise each student's ability to participate in sessions and get the most of the experience. Every student will get the opportunity to participate in eight debates across the week regardless of stream and receive detailed feedback on their speeches from our mentors as well as watching two show debates.

As well as classes and debates against your peers, Debate Academy offers a choice of electives covering ranges of topics that are the specialist areas of our mentors. Previous topics have included International Institutions, a history of the LGBT+ movement, the philosophy of democracy and a look into the politics of Israel. In these content focused sessions students are free to pursue their personal interests and learn more about the world.



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Mixed Formats track

Students in the mixed formats track will learn and practice in three different debating formats that are commonly used in UK debating competitions. Knowledge of any given format is not necessary prior to arrival, regardless of what ability level you are in, as quick re-caps and primers on the formats will be given. If you are interested however, links explaining the formats are provided below.

The first format is the ESU's **Schools' Mace** format. This is the format that is used in our national tournament, the ESU Schools' Mace, the largest debating competition for schools in the United Kingdom. For more information on how the format works, you can look at our tournament handbook [here](#).

The second format is **British parliamentary** debating. This is the format used by most university organised debating tournaments around the United Kingdom including those organised by the Cambridge and Oxford Unions. A guide explaining how this format works, written by the Cambridge Union for their schools' tournament, can be found [here](#).



The final format taught is the **World Schools** format. This is the format of the World Schools' Debating Championships as well as most international competitive debating. The ESU guide to this format can be found [here](#).

The mixed formats track normally has approximately 100-110 students in six separate classes placing students with similar experience together.

World Schools track

In this track, students will exclusively learn the **World Schools** format. Frequently taught by speakers who previously represented their country at the World Schools Debating Championships, this track is ideal for anyone either wanting to get to grips with how the world championship format takes place or to hone their skills in advance of national trials. In addition to the format guide above, more can be found out about the ESU's World Schools programme on our website [here](#).

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The world schools track normally has approximately 25-30 students in two classes placing students of similar experience together.

Experience streams

Whilst applying to Debate Academy students will be asked to tell us more about any debating and public speaking experience, as well as let us know what level they think they're at. As well as being assigned to the track you want, we will take this information and make sure you are in the right ability stream. This section is a handy guide for what those things mean. We get plenty of students from all categories at all age ranges every year so you'll always find others at your level.



Beginner - No previous experience of debating or public speaking as activities. If you are looking to build your confidence, learn the basics and find out what the activity of debating is like then this is for you. This level is a great way to kick off your involvement in debating with a bang!

Lower Intermediate - Whilst you might not have debated regularly before, this level is appropriate for people that participated in similar activities or have done one or two tournaments. If you have some previous experience of Model United Nations, Youth Parliament or Public Speaking for instance this is the right level for you. Here you will get your first taste of what it's like to start debating regularly and to get to understand how debating works at a deeper level. This will be a great place to hone your skills.

Upper Intermediate - Students that regularly compete will feel right at home here. Spar with other students, learn advanced tactics to give you that competitive edge and learn how to prepare for tournaments. If you are student looking to make the jump into the top levels of debating then this is the category for you.

Advanced - Each year many of the top schools' debaters come to compete against one another and stretch themselves even further at Debate Academy. If you're a serious debater looking at how to go from tournament finalist to tournament champion or are soon to be trialling for a spot on your country's international team, then this is the best experience you can get.

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Living at Debate Academy



Debate Academy is a residential Summer School in which all students will be staying in the boarding facilities provided by Uppingham School. The school is located in the picturesque small town of Uppingham in Rutland near Oakham train station.

This section will give you a little bit more detail about what the facilities look like.

Accommodation

Students will be spread across four of the school's 15 boarding houses close to the school site. They are all either inside the main teaching grounds or in a straight line from the school down High Street West and Stockerston road.

All boarding houses have dedicated communal areas and most also have their own dining facilities where students will eat each of their meals (those that don't will be given access to a different house that does have those facilities at meal times).



Rooms are a mix of dormitories, double rooms and single rooms. The priority order for allocating single rooms will be as follows:

- 1 Individual needs (e.g. medical requirements)
- 2 Older students will then be allocated a single room first
- 3 Finally students will be randomly allocated into single gender rooms/dormitories

Whilst all boarding houses will be co-ed we ensure that all rooms are single gender and students will be able to access male/female/gender-neutral shower and toilet facilities as well.

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Food

The on-site catering is also provided by Uppingham School. Each day a choice of hot or cold breakfasts is provided along with lunch and dinner in the boarding houses. We also provide fresh fruit and squash each day to keep students in top condition for their classes.

We cater for most dietary requirements though unfortunately are unable to provide halal or kosher meat due to a lack of local suppliers. If you have these requirements we instead recommend that you sign up for the vegetarian meals.

Free time and socialising



Each evening students will have a series of social options available to them organised by our mentors. After dinner each night our mentors share a selection of the hobbies that drive them outside of debating that students can choose from - some of the previous options have included a walk around Uppingham, stage-fighting and drama, ballroom dancing and bridge. This is a great opportunity for students to

learn new hobbies and relax after a day of debating.

In addition to this, so that students can meet new people we offer big catch-all socials that bring everyone together including sports night, quiz night and on the first day an evening of ice-breaker games.

In the breaks during the day students can walk around the beautiful Uppingham grounds and in pairs visit the shop just across from the school. Light refreshments in the form of squash, water and fruit will be provided each day as well.

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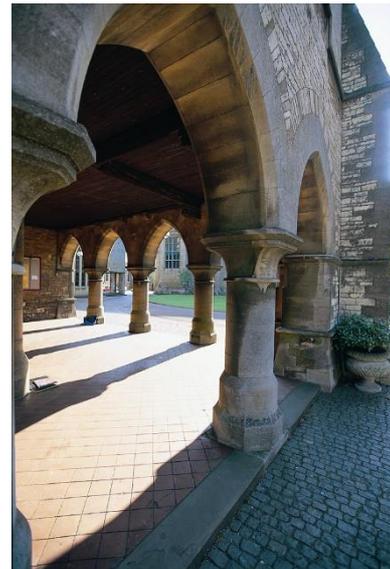
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Student Welfare

We are committed to making sure that Debate Academy is a safe and happy space for all students during the course. To that end we have a series of policies in place to ensure this. A few of the notable ones are:

- We are happy to accommodate any health-related issues (mental or physical) that we can throughout the course, and if there are requirements that may impact on the student's well-being we ask that this is communicated to us in advance so that we can plan accordingly
- We do not directly monitor students at all times - students are however expected to remain on the school site unless visiting the shop across the road in pairs. Students will be expected to adhere to a curfew to be in their rooms and attend all classes where they will be registered each night as well. Whilst for some of the older students this might feel restrictive it is necessary for the sound running of the course.
- Finally, in the event that a student does have issues whilst at the course, in addition to multiple qualified first-aiders being on site and available at any time we also have dedicated welfare points of contact to allow students to securely express anything that is bothering them whilst at the camp.
- All mentors are DBS checked and have completed online training in safeguarding best practice.



Applying to Debate Academy

You can find the link to apply to Debate Academy on our website [here](#). The cost per participant will be £495.

The ESU is able to offer partial or full bursaries to students in order to attend Debate Academy and we are committed to ensuring that no student's financial circumstances should present a barrier to their ability to attend. Our bursary fund will permit us to allocate the equivalent of full bursaries for at least 50% of students at Debate Academy.

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