



ENGLISH-SPEAKING UNION



# Debate Academy Guide 2022

*1-6 August 2022, Stamford Endowed Schools*

## 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. The new venue for Debate Academy 2022 is Stamford School.

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/programmes/debate-academy>

If you have any further questions or queries about Debate Academy feel free to get in touch with us at [dpt@esu.org](mailto:dpt@esu.org)

I look forward to seeing you there!

Gavin Illsley  
Head of Programmes  
English-Speaking Union

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*Students and staff at Debate Academy 2019, Uppingham School*

# Learning at Debate Academy

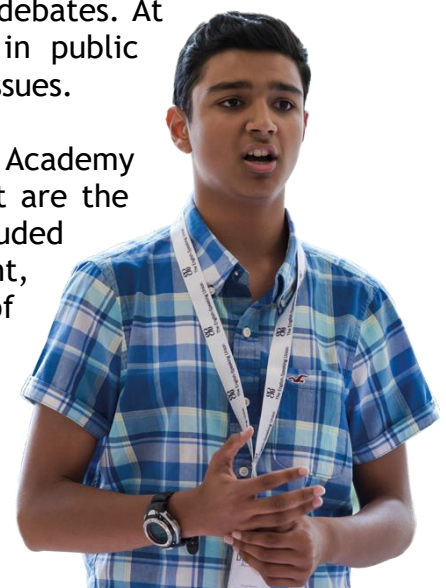


At Debate Academy you will receive expert tuition on debating from some of the best debaters in the country. You will get the chance to discuss world issues, sharpen your analytical, reasoning and public speaking skills, and spar with other students from all over the world in competitive debates.

Debate Academy offers two different tracks through the week, Mixed Formats and World Schools. The Mixed Format track is split into separate streams with classes for beginners, intermediates and advanced students. The World Schools track is for those with prior debating experience and is not open to beginners.

Every 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 your experience level. Class sizes will be under 25 to maximise each student's ability to participate in sessions and get the most out 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 your speeches from our mentors, as well as watching two show debates. At the end of the week you should feel more confident in public speaking, constructing arguments and engaging in topical issues.

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-focussed sessions students are free to pursue your personal interests and learn more about the world.



# Which ‘Track’ is for Me?

There are two different ‘tracks’, or pathways that students can take at Debate Academy. The track you choose, along with your current debating ability, will define which class you are in for the duration of the course.

## 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 Extended Mace* format. This is the format that is used in our national tournament, the ESU Schools’ Mace, the largest debating competition for schools in England. For more information on how the format works, you can look [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 students with prior debating experience wanting to get to grips with how the world championship format works or hone their skills in advance of national trials. This track is not open to complete beginners. In addition to the format guide above, more can be found out about the ESU’s World Schools programme on our website [here](#).

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

# Which 'Stream' is for Me?

Whilst applying to Debate Academy you will be asked to tell us more about any debating and public speaking experience you have, as well as let us know what level you think you'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 have 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, then 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.

# Living at Debate Academy



Debate Academy is a residential summer school in which all students will be staying in the boarding facilities provided by Stamford Endowed Schools. Stamford School and Stamford High School are located in the picturesque town of Stamford. This section will give you a little bit more detail about what the facilities look like.

## Accommodation

Students will be split across Stamford School and Stamford High School in seven of the newly refurbished boarding houses. The two sites are a short ten-minute walk apart. All teaching, activities and catering will be at Stamford School. Students staying at Stamford High School will be escorted across every morning by members of ESU staff and will be escorted back to their accommodation in the evening.



All boarding houses have dedicated communal areas with televisions, pool tables and musical instruments for the students to enjoy in their leisure time.

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.

### Food

All on-site catering is provided by Stamford Endowed Schools in the large communal dining hall at Stamford School. Each day a choice of hot or cold breakfasts is provided, along with lunch and dinner. We also provide fresh fruit and squash each day to keep students in top condition for their classes.

We cater for most dietary requirements; however, we are sadly unable to provide kosher meals. 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 to take part in. Some of the previous options have included a walk around the local town, 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 run socials that everyone takes part in, 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 Stamford School grounds and socialise with friends. Light refreshments in the form of squash, water and fruit will be provided each day during break times.

### Student Welfare

We are committed to making sure that Debate Academy is a safe and happy space for all students during the course. In order to ensure that students feel safe, we have a range of policies in place, including the following:

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 they are given permission to leave by a member of ESU staff. 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, if a student does have issues whilst at Debate Academy, 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 you to securely express anything that is bothering you during your stay.

All mentors are DBS checked and have completed online training in safeguarding best practice.



# Applying to Debate Academy

We hope this short guide has given you all the information that you need for Debate Academy, but feel free to get in touch with, Elle McLoughlin, Course Director at any time if you have any more questions.

You can find the link to apply to Debate Academy on our website [here](#). The cost per participant is £545 and includes all accommodation and food for the duration.



The ESU offers 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. We are able to offer bursaries of 50%, 75% or 100% of the course fee, allocated on a basis of financial need. We can also offer money towards travel expenses for students receiving bursaries. Please get in touch with us for more information.

[Click here to apply!](#)