

# The Oxford Times

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WEEKEND



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Blur star Alex ready for party

1,800 homes 'will swallow up villages'



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Elton tribute wins in court



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Boost for sport

## Sour results?

Let's make lemonade:  
92% of Greene's A level retakes improve by at least two grades.



GREENE'S COLLEGE OXFORD



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Discuss your retake:

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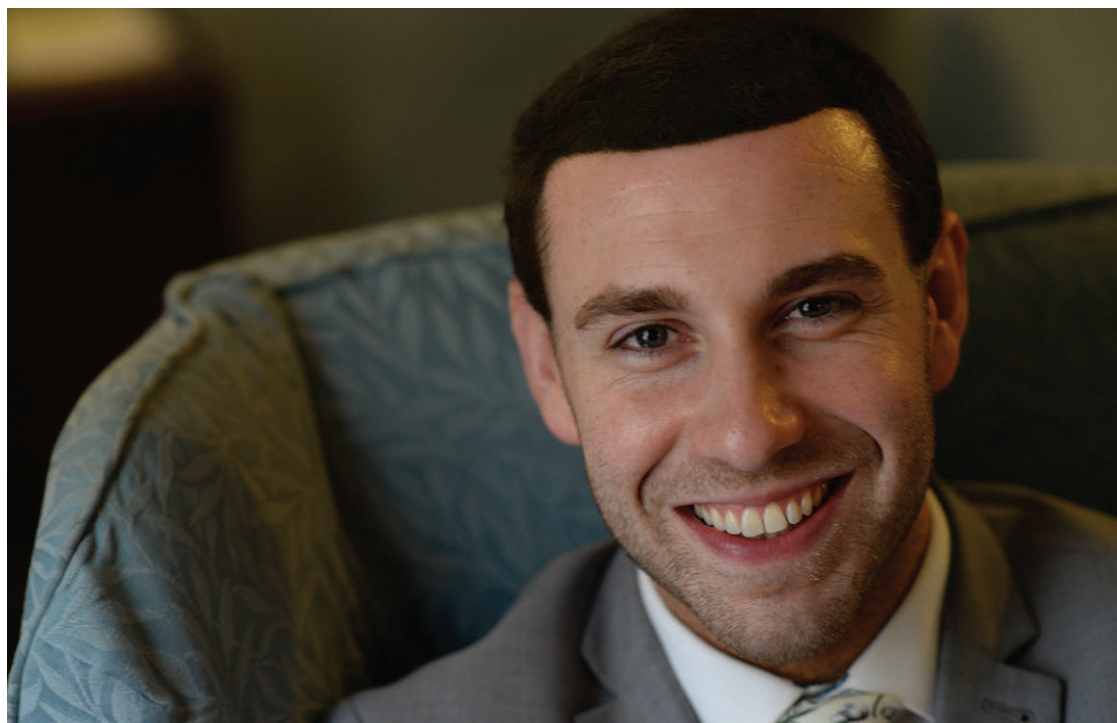
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## Time to Talk: At Greene's College Oxford education begins with a conversation



"Grant Connor, Academic Director, explains the importance of understanding the student's personal narrative"

I think myself very fortunate in my role as Academic Director because I have the opportunity to hear the personal narratives of our students first-hand. In a quite literal sense, each student's journey at Greene's begins with them telling us their story – about their pathway through education, about the challenges they have faced and the successes they have known, and about what they hope the future has in store. Each student's journey through education is unique and I believe that our role as educators is not to force this journey to follow the shape of predetermined paths, but rather to listen and respond to the voice of the student as they chart their own course.

The importance of understanding a student's personal narrative is perhaps clearest when talking to students who are debating retaking an A level. The vital first step, we have found, is always to articulate what has brought a student to their current position and to learn what they, as an individual, need in the year ahead.

It is through this that the Greene's tutorial method of learning reveals its greatest strength: because of our commitment to individual, paired and shared tuition (with a maximum group size of three students), we are able to work with our students to produce a truly individualised programme of study that takes note of their personal learning style and their academic priorities.

Each student begins their studies with, as we call it in college, a "diagnosis". The principal aim at the start of the academic year is for students and tutors to identify their strengths and weaknesses within a subject; to diagnose what might have prevented the student from reaching their fullest potential in the past and how we can support them in overcoming such hurdles in the future. The endpoint of this diagnostic period is for the student and tutor, in collaboration, to hone a bespoke study plan, the blueprint of how the student will rebuild their understanding of their subject with especial focus on the areas with which they have previously struggled and with a keen eye on how to secure examination success on the second sitting.

Naturally, we understand that the decision to retake is not one that students and their families take lightly – and that the start of a retake programme can be a challenging time for students. This makes it all the more important to ensure that fulsome support is in place from the very first day to allow students to start the next leg of their journey with confidence and a clear direction.

With this in mind, Greene's has fostered a long tradition of connecting students with a Personal Tutor to act as their mentor - their "compass", if you will – along the way. The Personal Tutor is a member of the Greene's tutor body (so will themselves be well versed in offering tuition through our tutorial method) whose role sits at the intersection of academic and pastoral life in the college: they work with students to refine study

skills, to promote good organisation and time management, to provide insight into how best to approach their academic pursuits, but also to offer guidance if a student should encounter any obstacles in their way.

What has become clear to us in the 56 years since our founding under Edward Greene is that the personalised focus afforded to our students in their subjects through our use of the tutorial method – and the individualised attention that comes from the support of the Personal Tutor – has a transformative effect on a young person's education. This effect is never more pronounced than when we are working with a student who is looking for a second chance to succeed in their A level studies and to forge ahead on the next part of their academic and professional careers. Since 2020, 92% of the retake grades received by Greene's students have improved by two grades or more compared to the grades with which they joined the college. What is more, we are immensely proud that, in the past academic year, Greene's has helped students to secure offers from four of the five G5 institutions in the UK and 22 of the 24 Russell Group universities.

With the start of our next academic fast approaching, we are once again excited to welcome a new cohort of students, to hear their narratives, and to walk beside them, if only for a while, at this crucial moment in their own journeys.



A letter to students from  
Carmen Dare,  
Principal  
Greene's College Oxford

Dear Student,

### Sour Results? Let's make lemonade

Retaking your examinations can determine your future academic and career path. Retaking your A levels may be necessary if you have a specific degree in mind and missed out on the grades. Do not let one little setback stop you from achieving your life goals!

With so many options available, from enrolling at your original sixth-form college, choosing a different college, or opting for online courses, making a decision can be difficult. As such it is crucial to get it right.

Depending on how much time you wish to allocate to your retakes, you could travel abroad, work, volunteer, get involved with a charity, or gain valuable experience alongside your studies.

At Greene's, there is so much flexibility; students can study abroad, for example at our campus in Portugal, or have a part-time job alongside their studies. Some opt for a hybrid option with both online and face-to-face tuition to allow for maximum flexibility.

In terms of universities, most accept A level resits, and many even see retaking A levels as a sign of your strength and commitment. Some universities will require you to provide an explanation of why you retook your A levels and expect extenuating circumstances, so framing the university application in the right way is crucial. You can always call a university to find out what their guidelines are.

It can be a daunting prospect, but with the right approach and support, it is possible to improve your results and achieve the grades you need to move on to the next stage of your education or career. Transition means change, and being able to cope with change is a key life skill.

Please share with us what you are doing to get into the university or career of your dreams.

We can support you with developing your own approaches to your retake programme.

Yours sincerely

*Carmen Dare*

Principal, Greene's College Oxford



## Book your free consultation

With over 55 years of experience, our expert team of academics are here to help you to understand your A level retake options. Book your slot today.





# Pedro in pole position: Greene's student races to success



Pedro, an 18-year-old student at Greene's campus in Estoril, Portugal, has made history by becoming the youngest driver to compete in the European Le Mans Series (ELMS) this season, considered one of the gateways to the legendary 24 Hours of Le Mans.

His debut season in sportscars, in the LMP3 category of the European Le Mans Series, was at the Circuit de Barcelona after competing in Italian F4 for the last two seasons.

He's also the youngest Portuguese driver to compete in a season; only 17 years old, Pedro drove the DKR's Duqueine M30 D08 prototype car alongside two

experienced drivers, British James Winslow and Russian Alexander Bukhantsov.

His favourite driver is Lewis Hamilton, who he admires "because he fights for more than just racing. I greatly appreciate his fights for equality and diversity inside and outside sports. Also, I like him because he's the driver who started to focus more on the psychological side, and not only the physical side of racing."

Pedro studies A level Business Studies and Economics full-time at Greene's campus in Estoril, both online and in person. In addition to his subject tutorials, he works with a Personal Tutor to help him stay on track with his academic goals.

One of which might be attending a U.K. or U.S.-based university in the future.

Pedro discovered Greene's through a fellow racing driver, who appreciated the various layers of flexibility, such as hybrid study-options and flexible schedules that accommodated his racing commitments.

"Before I decided to go to Greene's I was at a point in time when I had to finish school. So that was quite tough. And at the same time, racing was tough because I was going to move to the European Championship. So it was a big move and a big decision.

"Greene's helped me to drive

better; it enabled me to do things at my own pace. "I was able to focus and divide my time between studying and racing. This helped me to be more successful."

I appreciate Greene's flexibility; we have the campus where we can socialise and make new friends. "Having the option to do face-to-face or online lessons really helps emotionally and academically.

"I am already excited for the next championship to start. I am very motivated because it will be like discovering a new world of racing."

Greene's staff and students will certainly cheer Pedro on.

## Student's top national exam accolades

When Oxfordshire student Freddie, 20, transferred to Greene's College Oxford, he did not expect to receive national accolades from the AQA examination board and The Royal Geographical Society for his academic achievements.

Freddie was presented with The Royal Geographical Society (with the Institute of British Geographers) prestigious Excellence Award for achieving the highest marks nationally in the 2022 Geography AS level AQA examinations.

The Society's Excellence Awards recognise and celebrate the hard work and success of students who achieve the highest marks in the GCSE, IGCSE, A level, Pre-U and International Baccalaureate Geography examinations each year.

Mrs Carmen Dare, Greene's Principal, said: "I was thrilled to hear about Freddie's success. It is well-deserved, given his commitment and dedication towards his AS in Geography, History A level and EPQ studies at Greene's, which included online tuition".

She explained: "At Greene's College Oxford, our educational philosophy is based on one simple assumption: if students' education is tailored to suit their unique qualities and needs, they are more likely to be successful.

"Whether students want to transfer from AS levels to A levels, between examination boards, or simply continue where they left at their previous institution, we are experts in designing a programme that suits every A level transfer student with minimum interruption to their ongoing studies. Greene's provides a truly seamless transition".

## Johnnie: "Greene's has bolstered my academic confidence"

Johnnie failed to take his A levels in the first place due to experiencing a mental health crisis around the exam season of 2022.

"Greene's gave me a valuable opportunity to retain and consolidate what I had learned previously and enhance my understanding of the areas of the subjects (in my case, History and Philosophy) in which I wanted to increase my confidence.

"I found the personalised tutorials available at Greene's particularly helpful as they added a degree of individuality not always found in classroom learning and allowed the tutorials to be conversational.

"This made concepts easier to grasp and

questions easier to answer. I now feel better placed to take my exams than I did this time last year, partly due to the way Greene's has bolstered my academic confidence and changed my attitude towards examinations, making them seem a far more achievable feat.

"I recommend Greene's to any students retaking their A Levels for the academic improvements they are likely to gain and how it can be fulfilling for them as individuals with extra-curricular activities and a healthy student culture."



## Pradyna: "I recommend Greene's to anyone disappointed by their A level results"

"I came to Greene's because I did not want to abandon my academic ambitions. Whilst my grades were satisfactory, I tried to do justice to my passion for what I was studying. Hence, I chose Greene's College Oxford, as I knew they could support me in achieving my academic goals.

"Despite being a new experience, the tutorial style was a great match due to its personalised approach: I received detailed feedback on assignments, trial examinations and tutorials.

"It helped me take the initiative to consistently do better, as I knew what

areas needed improvement. Thus, I could ask my tutors for extra materials on specific topics to improve my understanding; or more practice papers to enhance my exam technique.

"I was excited to attend every tutorial, knowing that my tutors shared the same

enthusiasm for the subject and had extensive knowledge that enabled in-depth conversations. They challenged me to delve beyond the specification when I was comfortable with a topic, which instilled a sense of confidence in my academic abilities. Still, I could adapt the structure of my studies to

accommodate extra guidance and take more time on a topic whenever I required additional support.

"Overall, I recommend Greene's to anyone disappointed after receiving their A level results. What really works is their wide-ranging support system:

from subject tutor and Personal Tutor support to social events and workshops.

"Greene's College is full of wonderful people who work hard to build your confidence and nurture your abilities to propel you to academic success."

## The impact of retakes: clarity on aspirations and goals

Jan Alden explains, "I have been a Personal Tutor at Greene's College for over five years and have worked with many diverse students who have retaken their A levels. Seeing students achieve their target grades has been rewarding due to the bespoke paired and small-group tutorials at Greene's, which cater to each student.

"Students retaking their A levels benefit from hindsight and can learn from past experiences and mistakes. They come back with greater clarity of their aspirations

and goals and, more importantly, what they need to succeed. Individual timetables provide flexibility and scope to earn money and gain valuable work

experience while improving their grades.

"My approach to tutoring students retaking their A levels can differ significantly from a first-time student. Returning students know the importance of independent study before tutorials and the commitment they require. My role is to challenge their learning and

provide clarification on previous material.

"I have seen the benefits of retakes and the confidence it gives students to pursue alternative paths, and I have seen how setbacks have turned into opportunities for them. As a Personal Tutor, I have worked with students who did not pass their exams due to anxiety. However, by putting their well-being at the centre of tutorials and ensuring students feel comfortable, they were able to write their exams.

"I first attended college, then worked before deciding to change direction and return to university, which required retaking mathematics five years after formally leaving school. Having some life experience behind me, I understood it is common to experience setbacks which I knew could not be avoided. It is what you do with these setbacks that matters in the end. They only define you if you do not dust yourself off and try again. Adversity makes you stronger. It is not what you achieve; it is what you overcome."



Left) Tutor Jan Alden teaches student Pradyna



# Make lemonade.

Discuss your retake with Charlie, our Registrar.  
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# Make an impact



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working with Greene's.

