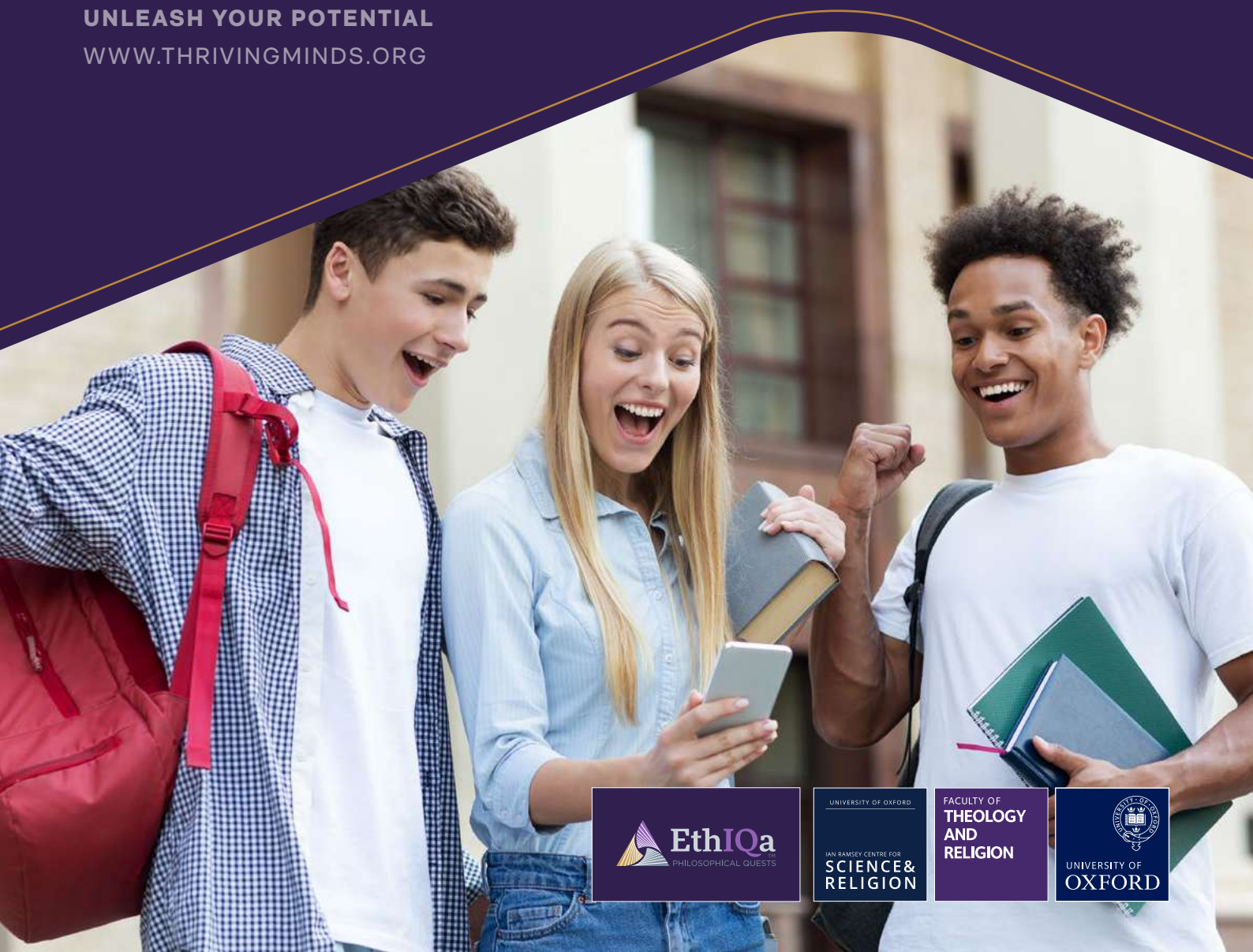


NURTURING BRILLIANCE

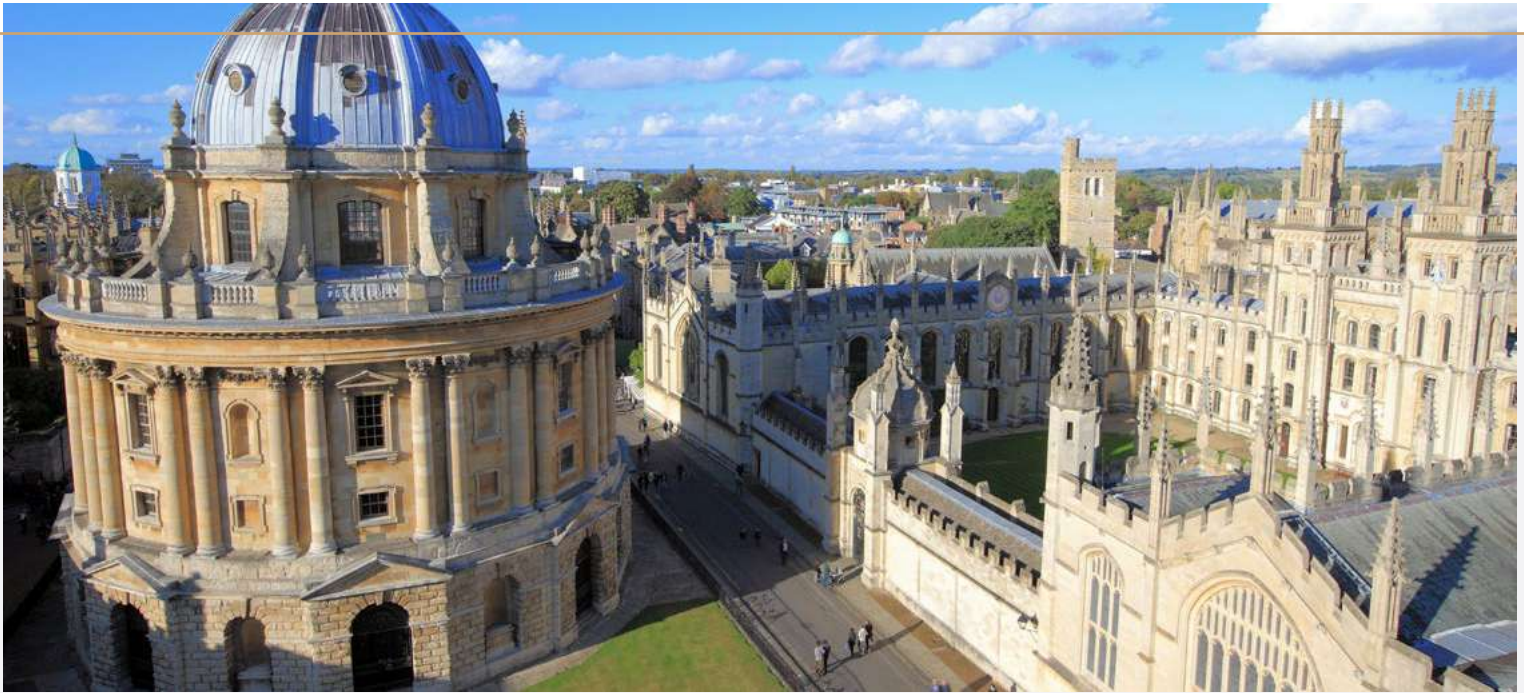
# Senior Stretch 2024

**Big Ideas for Bright Minds:**  
A conference for more able and  
ambitious students

UNLEASH YOUR POTENTIAL  
[WWW.THRIVINGMINDS.ORG](http://WWW.THRIVINGMINDS.ORG)



# About



## Welcome to Senior Stretch 2024

Inviting all able and ambitious students age 14+ to unlock your full potential! Join us for our 2024 Oxford Senior Stretch Conference where you'll embark on a transformative journey of self-discovery, innovation, and intellectual growth.

### ABOUT THE CONFERENCE

The Gifted Student Conference is an annual gathering of exceptional young minds, designed to foster creativity, critical thinking, and personal development. Join us in the pursuit of nurturing brilliance, fostering lifelong learners, and creating a world where gifted students thrive not only academically but as well-rounded, empathetic, and socially responsible citizens. Together, we can unlock the full potential of gifted individuals and pave the way for a brighter future. This year's theme, "Nurturing Brilliance: Unleash Your Potential," will inspire students to explore their passions, embrace challenges, and connect with like-minded peers from around the region.

### WHAT TO EXPECT

**Keynote Speakers:** Engage with renowned experts who will share their insights on unlocking your potential.

**Peer Networking:** Connect with gifted students from diverse backgrounds, exchange ideas, and forge lifelong friendships.

**Discussions:** Participate in thought-provoking discussions on contemporary issues and global challenges.

**Critical thinking and Problem solving:** Explore new ideas and develop strategies for real-world challenges.



“This amazing day improved and consolidated our philosophical learning while breaking down more controversial topics to test our judgement and opinion-making. I particularly enjoyed the funny and slightly quirky anecdotes. The sessions were engaging and very enjoyable to listen to.”

# Programme

## **Cogito Ergo Sum. Introducing Descartes**

**Julie Arliss**

### **Discover the Foundations of Modern Philosophy: Descartes' Cogito Ergo Sum**

A thought-provoking session that invites you to delve into the profound ideas of René Descartes and his groundbreaking concept of the Cogito. Beyond being a mere catchphrase, Descartes' declaration "I think, therefore I am" represents a revolutionary idea that has left an indelible mark on the landscape of human thought. Understand how Descartes' Cogito has implications for knowledge, consciousness and reality and continues to shape our thoughts. You will take a deep dive into Radical Doubt, challenging preconceived notions and encouraging a mind-expanding exploration of existential questions. This session is more than an academic endeavor; it's an invitation to discover the roots of modern philosophical thought and understand how a single idea can shape the very fabric of our understanding.

## **The Oxbridge Interview Question**

**Julie Arliss**

At both Oxford and Cambridge Universities, admission interview questions are meticulously crafted to provide candidates with an opportunity to showcase their genuine ability and potential. These questions aim to assess whether a candidate can think laterally and apply their reasoning to novel ideas and diverse contexts. It's important to note that there is no pre-defined 'correct' answer, emphasizing the challenge of demonstrating one's thinking prowess.

This session aims to equip students with indispensable Oxbridge-standard thinking tools, introducing fundamental rules of logic and strategies for cultivating advanced lateral thinking skills. The objective is to empower individuals to navigate and excel in any nuanced landscape, regardless of whether they are contemplating a university application. Throughout the session, we will explore a variety of questions that encourage participants to apply these thinking tools effectively.

## **Science and Miracles**

**Dr. Andrew Pinsent, live  
from University of Oxford**

Join us for a thought-provoking talk tailored for our more able students, as Dr. Andrew Pinsent, a former particle physicist turned Catholic priest, explores the fascinating world of miracles. This session will delve into intricate debates about the nature and existence of miracles, questioning whether they are misunderstood natural phenomena or events that defy scientific explanation.

Dr. Pinsent will challenge you to consider what truly constitutes a miracle and whether such phenomena need to contravene the laws of nature to be deemed genuine. Engage with profound questions that sit at the intersection of science and faith, expanding your understanding of the universe and its mysteries.



# Programme

## What Dreams May Come?

Julie Arliss

Have you ever wondered whether there is anything more to life than this? It's a question that has intrigued thinkers throughout history and sparked the curiosity of some of the greatest minds. Plato claimed that, 'an unexamined life is not worth living,' and with this as our guiding principle the session will chart the map of ideas surrounding this profound question. Students will be invited to reflect on their own beliefs and explore for themselves claims about reincarnation, rebirth, migration of the soul and resurrection. Together, we'll navigate the scientific and philosophical challenges tied to reports of out-of-body experiences, near-death experiences, and the paranormal.

This session is not just about answering questions but empowering students with the tools to explore one of life's greatest mysteries on their own terms. Join us as we outline the map of ideas related to life after death and encourage you to embark on your own intellectual journey.

**For in that sleep of death what dreams may come,  
When we have shuffled off this mortal coil,  
Must give us pause.**

Hamlet: Act III, scene 1, line 66.

## Debate

### Exploring the Ethical Implications of Artificial Intelligence in the Modern World

#### A Debate for More Able and Ambitious Students.

AI represents one of the most rapidly advancing fields of technology. New breakthroughs and applications continually emerge, pushing the boundaries of what is possible. The prospect of revolutionary change and disruption generates excitement but, what are the risks? There is a wide ranging, ongoing discussion of the implications of artificial intelligence and, in this debate, we will examine the ethical, societal, economic and technical implications of AI technologies. For critical thinking, a global perspective, interdisciplinary learning, problem solving and future career opportunities this is a not to be missed debate.



# Speakers



## Julie Arliss

Julie Arliss is an outstanding Gifted Educator, nurturing brilliance through a holistic approach. At the heart of Julie Arliss' philosophy lies a deep commitment to unlocking the unique potential within every gifted student. She believes that gifted education is not just about cultivating academic excellence but also fostering holistic development, instilling a love for lifelong learning, and nurturing the well-being of each student. Thriving Minds provides talented students with the tools necessary to cultivate critical thinking, analyse complex problems, and innovate. This philosophy encourages students to question the status quo, explore new ideas, and develop solutions to real-world challenges. In placing great value on mentorship and guidance students benefit from the wisdom and expertise of educators who not only teach but also inspire and support them on their educational journey. Through steadfast commitment to this philosophy, numerous more able and ambitious students have not only achieved academic excellence but have also grown into compassionate, innovative and socially conscious individuals. Julie Arliss' legacy extends far beyond the conference platform, influencing the lives of students who carry these values with them throughout their lives.

For almost three decades Julie has collaborated with some of the greatest living thinkers delivering outstanding programmes for more able students across the UK and Australasia.



## Dr. Andrew Pinsent

Dr. Andrew Pinsent brings a unique blend of expertise in science and theology. With a background as a particle physicist contributing to research at CERN, Dr. Pinsent later transitioned to theology and is now a Catholic priest. As the Research Director of the Ian Ramsey Centre for Science and Religion at the University of Oxford, he bridges the gap between faith and reason. Dr. Pinsent's distinguished career and interdisciplinary insights make him a leading voice in contemporary debates on miracles and the nature of the universe. His talk promises to provide deep insights and foster meaningful discussion on one of the most profound multidisciplinary questions of existence.



**Excellence is not an act  
but a habit.**

Aristotle

### WHY ATTEND?

The aim of this study day is to help curious and ambitious students to:

- Improve their thinking skills
- Begin to be able to identify what is fundamental from what is trivial
- Become intellectually creative
- Identify assumptions and distinguish between good and poor arguments
- Think systematically and rigorously about relevant modern day issues

**Most people would  
sooner die than think.  
In fact, they do.**

Bertrand Russell



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SNAPCHAT  
aconferences

# Registration



Early Bird Registration (until March 31<sup>st</sup> 2024): \$45

Regular Registration \$50

Registration includes access to all conference sessions & networking.

## HOW TO REGISTER

Visit our website at [thrivingminds.org](https://thrivingminds.org) to register online or download the brochure. For inquiries, email us at [headoffice@academy-ltd.com](mailto:headoffice@academy-ltd.com)

## JOIN THE CONVERSATION

Connect with us on social media using **#GiftedStudentConference2024** to stay updated and interact with fellow attendees before the conference.

## DON'T MISS OUT!

The Gifted Student Conference 2024 promises to be an extraordinary experience that will ignite your passion, inspire your intellect, and empower your future. Register today and prepare to unleash your full potential!



“Outstanding education is the compass that guides us towards the limitless horizons of knowledge and empowers us to navigate the complexities of the world.”



**REGISTER YOUR PLACE ONLINE AT:**  
**THRIVINGMINDS.ORG**

# Conference Dates



## Brisbane

**Wednesday 24 July 2024**

Oxford Senior Stretch  
09:30–14:30

**Junior Stretch and Challenge**  
25 July

**Professional Development for Staff**  
26 July

## Melbourne

**Friday 2 August 2024**

Oxford Senior Stretch  
09:30–14:30

**Junior Stretch and Challenge**  
31 July

**Professional Development for Staff**  
1 August

## Sydney

**Tuesday 6 August 2024**

Oxford Senior Stretch  
09:30–14:30

**Junior Stretch and Challenge**  
7 August

**Professional Development for Staff**  
8 August

## Adelaide

**Wednesday 14 August 2024**

Oxford Senior Stretch  
09:30–14:30

**Junior Stretch and Challenge**  
13 August

**Professional Development for Staff**  
15 August

## Christchurch

**Tuesday 20 August 2024**

Oxford Senior Stretch  
09:30–14:30

**Junior Stretch and Challenge**  
21 August

**Professional Development for Staff**  
22 August

Additional dates are  
available on request.





**Academy Conferences PTY**

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