



THE BRITISH
INTERNATIONAL
SCHOOL, CAIRO

IGCSE AND GCSE

OPTIONS BOOKLET 2018-19

Life in Key Stage 4 | Curriculum | Grading System



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Welcome to Key Stage 4

We are very pleased to present our GCSE and IGCSE options booklet. It aims to give both parents and students a complete picture of life in Key Stage 4 at The British International School, Cairo.

The next academic year brings significant changes to the curriculum as a result of reforms introduced by the UK government. This booklet outlines the changes in grading, the move to IGCSE in some subjects and details of each subject. It is important that parents and students read this document carefully in order to be fully aware of these significant changes.

Our options booklet this year contains a student perspective section in most subjects. Our Sixth Form prefects have produced these sections in order to provide further help for students when they are making their choices. Sixth Form prefects will also be playing a greater role in the options process this year by speaking to parents and students about their experiences in Key Stage 4.

We hope you find this document useful and informative. Please do let us know if you require any further information or guidance.



A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Dan Dorran', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Daniel Dorran
Deputy Head of Senior School

dan.dorran@bisc.edu.eg

Curriculum Overview at BISC

In Years 7 - 9 students have been studying the English National Curriculum Key Stage 3. As they move into Year 10 they start two-year courses leading to General Certificate of Secondary Education examinations (GCSEs) at the end of Year 11. In some subjects, students will follow International GCSE. These Key Stage 4 courses in turn lead to either the International Baccalaureate (IB) Diploma Programme course or a BTEC level 3 qualification in the Sixth Form at BISC. They will also lead to admission to other courses at other schools, such as A-Levels.

Approximate age at start of year	BISC Year Names	BISC Courses
11	Year 7	British National Curriculum Key Stage 3
12	Year 8	
13	Year 9	
14	Year 10	GCSE and IGCSE
15	Year 11	
16	Year 12	International Baccalaureate or BTEC
17	Year 13	

I/GCSEs are highly valued by schools, universities and employers, so they will be useful whatever students are planning to do afterwards. IGCSEs have less British content than GCSEs so in many cases they are more accessible to international students who do not have knowledge of the UK.

There have been significant changes in GCSE courses based on a review of the qualifications by the UK government. Some I/GCSE subjects will receive grades of 9-1 while others will retain the A*/G grades.

The GCSE qualification mainly involves studying the theory of a subject, with some investigative work. Some subjects also involve practical work. I/GCSEs are studied full-time at school taking five terms to complete.

I/GCSEs are assessed mainly through written examinations, although in some subjects there are also elements of coursework. Some subjects, like Art and Design, have more coursework and fewer examinations.

Summary of Courses and Grading

Subject	Course	Grading	Head of Department
*Arabic (Please read note below)	IGCSE	9-1	riman.nemr@bisc.edu.eg
Art and Design	GCSE	9-1	peter.jenkinson@bisc.edu.eg
Business Studies	IGCSE	A*/G	chris.beales@bisc.edu.eg
Computer Science	IGCSE	A*/G	omar.sheikh@bisc.edu.eg
Drama	GCSE	9-1	georgina.chakos@bisc.edu.eg
English Language	IGCSE	A*/G	kathryn.nutbeem@bisc.edu.eg
English Literature	IGCSE	9-1	kathryn.nutbeem@bisc.edu.eg
Economics	IGCSE	A*/G	chris.beales@bisc.edu.eg
French and Spanish	IGCSE	9-1	candice.jouffrai@bisc.edu.eg
Geography	IGCSE	9-1	jose.alvarez@bisc.edu.eg
History	IGCSE	A*/G	ronan.banks@bisc.edu.eg
Maths	IGCSE	9-1	muhammad.rashid@bisc.edu.eg
Music	GCSE	9-1	ruth.brierley@bisc.edu.eg
PE	IGCSE	A*/G	grace.dennisonwhite@bisc.edu.eg
Science Double Award	GCSE	9-1	sarah.fuschillo@bisc.edu.eg
**Science Single Award	IGCSE	A*/G	sarah.fuschillo@bisc.edu.eg

* At the End of Year 9 students complete a GCSE in Arabic. The IGCSE Arabic course above is designed for native speakers. Please note that students cannot take Arabic B (non-native) at IB level if they take this course. Arabic A (Native) at IB level may be offered subject to demand but this cannot be guaranteed.

** The vast majority of students will take double award but some students (depending on their educational needs) may take single science (one GCSE). Parents will be contacted if the school recommends this option.

The 9-1 Grading System

The UK Government has decided to change the way in which GCSE results are graded. Hitherto, GCSEs have been graded using the A*-G system with eight levels of attainment recognised. In future, a nine-level numerical system will be used with GCSEs graded from 9 (highest) to 1 (lowest). The new system is being introduced in phases over several years with different subjects making the transition at different times. It is quite possible therefore, that a student may have some grades using the old system and some with the new, numeric system.

For international schools the transition is likely to take longer and it will also depend on the examination board. For example, the Cambridge International Examination board is still in discussions with international schools on whether to implement the change and when.

British, American, Canadian and European universities will recognise both grading systems. The impact within Egypt, particularly AUC entry requirements, is as yet unclear.

The conversion between the two systems is relatively straightforward. The Edexcel examination board describes it as follows:

- broadly the same proportion of students will achieve a grade 4 and above as currently achieve a grade C and above
- broadly the same proportion of students will achieve a grade 7 and above as currently achieve a grade A and above
- broadly the same proportion of students will achieve a grade 1 and above as currently achieve a grade G and above.

For matriculation to the IB Diploma at BISC where a minimum of 6 B grades (or better) is required, a level 6 will be deemed the equivalent of a B grade.

For the BTEC diploma where a minimum of 5 C grades (or better), including English and Mathematics, are required, a level 5 will be deemed the equivalent of C grade.

Choosing Your Subjects

Everyone in Year 10 and Year 11 will study:

- English Language IGCSE
- English Literature IGCSE
- Mathematics IGCSE
- Science Double Award GCSE (2)
- Students will also continue to have two double PE lessons a week and a single PSHE lesson – these subjects are not examined.

Students will also choose 4 additional subjects to study, one of which must be a language.

Languages You must choose one language	3 additional subjects are chosen from the following list. Please note that student cannot choose Business and Economics together.	
French IGCSE	Business Studies	Geography
Spanish IGCSE	*PE GCSE	*Drama
**Arabic IGCSE (Native Speakers)	History	*Music
	Economics	*Art
	Computer Science	

* Subject to viability.

** At the End of Year 9 students complete a GCSE in Arabic. The IGCSE Arabic course above is designed for native speakers. Please note that students cannot take Arabic B (non-native) at IB level if they take this course. We may offer Arabic A (Native) at IB level subject to demand but cannot guarantee this.

After choices are made, a timetable is produced. While every effort is made to ensure that students get to study their first choices, this is not always possible. Students who do not get their first choice will be contacted and alternatives will be discussed.

- You will be offered a careers interview with our Careers Councillor. Please arrange a suitable time. Your parents are encouraged to attend this interview with you.
- Read the I/GCSE Options Booklet carefully for course details.
- Talk to, or email your teachers about options and ask for their advice.
- Make sure your online form is submitted in by **Thursday 8th March** – if you submit your form late, your options will be limited. Further details on making your choices will be sent via email by Mr. Dorrان.

Guidance for Option Choices

For students

You should choose:

- A modern foreign language other than English
- A humanities subject (Business Studies, Geography, History)
- Students are not allowed to choose both Business and Economics. Choosing either subject will still allow you to study IB Economics or IB Business.

We also strongly encourage you to choose a creative subject (Art, Drama or Music)

In addition, you will be offered a careers interview with the Careers Advisor, to help you make your choices. Please make contact via email to make an appointment and encourage your parents to attend with you. You should also discuss your options with your form tutor, Head of Year and subject specialists.

Remember:

- Close as few 'doors' as possible – look ahead at what courses and careers may no longer be easy to do if you drop a subject now.
- Choose subjects that you enjoy – but think first; why you enjoy them?
- Choose subjects that you are going to do well in – but do not just go by present grades.

For parents

- Help your child to find out as much as possible about the courses and qualifications they can do. It will help your child if you also attend the careers interview.
- Gently challenge a choice they are thinking of that concerns you. For example, if you feel that they have not done enough research, or if you feel they have underestimated their ability or are being influenced by what their friends are taking. Please email a subject teacher if you need more information.
- Your child is more likely to succeed if their choices fit their interests and abilities.
- Help them to identify these by encouraging them to discuss how they feel about different lessons, spare time activities, tests, examinations and practical projects.
- If your child has no clear plans at this stage, encourage them to opt for a broad range of courses. If they have a particular career in mind, they may need specific experience, subjects, qualifications and grades to do it. Look at course entry requirements in online prospectuses and, for higher education courses that interest them, on the university websites and www.ucas.com

Life in Years 10 and 11

PASTORAL CARE

There is a pastoral support structure based, in the first instance, around the Form Tutor. Every day there is a meeting between the Form Tutor and the Form; a ten-minute registration period is scheduled for the beginning of the day. It must be stressed that this is seen as an important contact period and parents are urged to ensure that all students are in the building in good time so as to attend registration at 08.00.

There is a single Personal, Social and Health Education (PSHE) lesson on one day of each week, thus giving scope for a developing relationship between student and tutor. The majority of teachers have been assigned to a tutor group and are in close contact with that group. This leads to a monitoring of progress, both academic and social, within the confines of the students' peer group.

In addition to the channels outlined, the Head of Key Stage takes overall responsibility for the pastoral care of students. In the case of Years 10 and 11, Mr Banks is the Head of Key Stage who works closely with the Head of Year 10 and Head of Year 11.

The table below outlines who parents should contact in case of concerns about their child:



The tutor is responsible for the overall welfare of the student, and has an overview of their academic and social progress at school. She/he is the link person between the parent and the school.



For academic concerns in any *specific* subject, parents are encouraged to contact the subject teachers/ Head of Department.

Parents will receive regular reports on students' progress and there are scheduled Parents' Days where parents have the opportunity to discuss progress with the Form Tutor, subject teachers and the Head of Section.

STUDENT SUPPORT

At BISC, we aim to support every student to achieve their full potential. We offer a range of support strategies for students, including:

- Support sessions after school
- Coursework clinics
- Weekend workshops
- Supervised study

Details of these events will be published in the Bulletin and also emailed to students in advance.

A STUDENT PERSPECTIVE ON KEY STAGE 4

Key Stage 4 was overall a great experience; I can safely say that I learnt a lot from it. The workload, the memories and the experiences prepared me and shaped me to become the person I am now. In Key Stage 4, I was doing nine subjects that were all equally demanding. It was quite easy at the beginning; however, towards the end of Year 10 and exams I began to panic because I felt that I was running out of time. To combat this and take control of my own studying, I developed a system where I dedicated my efforts to one subject per week for the entire second year of GCSE. This allowed me to complete what was required in class and pick up my grades. The workload was quite a lot with the subjects I chose, but gradually I learnt how to manage my time well.

Key Stage 4 is preparation for the Sixth Form and the workload will only continue in the years to come, therefore my advice is to start early and create a system for learning that works for you. This will build up your independence, which is a huge requirement in the coming stages of learning.

The best part of Key Stage 4 was the IYA trips, both Bronze and Silver. IYA built up my confidence and was a great adventure to experience with my year group and we definitely got a lot closer because of it. To balance the workload, I also took part in a lot of extra curricular activities, such as BSME, Football, MUN and Hopeful Youth. While taking part in all these activities, I felt very committed and involved in the school, which made the whole experience of Key Stage 4 a lot better. It is very important to balance the workload to keep you motivated and interested.

Key Stage 4 is an experience and a memory. I advise to pick the subjects that you are interested in and to get involved with school events to allow you to build up relationships with people that you will remember forever.

By Mona Mettawa

IGCSE ARABIC for Native Arabic Speakers – Edexcel

The International General Certificate of Secondary Education (IGCSE) Arabic syllabus is designed for native speakers of Arabic. Students need a minimum of A* at GCSE Arabic to apply for this course.

All students considering taking this course will be asked to sit an entrance test to assess their suitability for this course. Anyone interested in opting for this course should speak to Mrs. Rimam for guidance.

Why Study Arabic IGCSE?

To be able to:

- Communicate accurately, appropriately and effectively in writing.
- Understand and respond appropriately to what you read.
- Enjoy and appreciate the language.
- Promote your personal development and an understanding of yourself and others.

Course Content

- Intermediate and advanced grammar skills.
- Comprehension concerning different aspects of literature and language.
- Study of media (newspapers – magazines – T.V. – Internet – computing – cinema).
- Writing formats: essays, letters (formal and informal), short stories and speeches.
- Study of literary texts from pre-Islamic periods to modern times.

Paper	Mode of assessment	Weighting	Length
1	Examination Paper 1, targeting grades 1 - 9	70%	2 hours 15 minutes
2	Examination Paper 2, targeting grades 1 - 9	30%	1 hour 30 minutes

Paper 1 (3 sections)

Section 1 (30 marks)

This section focuses on reading comprehension through a series of short-answer comprehension questions based on a non-fiction reading passage.

Section 2 (20 marks)

In **Part 1**, candidates will be presented with a short text which they will be required to summarise.

In **Part 2**, candidates will be required to produce a piece of directed writing based on the theme of the text from Part One. The task will require candidates to write in a given form for a specified purpose and audience.

Section 3 (20 marks)

This section will test the candidates' grammatical usage in a series of exercises. The maximum mark for this section is 20.

Paper 2 (continuous writing)

Paper 2 will require candidates to produce **two** pieces of continuous writing. Candidates will choose **two** titles from a choice of six. Candidates are advised to write about 300 words on each of their two chosen topics. The six titles may include a range of writing styles and purposes, such as discursive, narrative, persuasive, descriptive, explanatory or informative.

The Student Perspective

IGCSE Arabic is a course where you investigate formal Arabic grammar, analyse Arabic texts and write prose in Modern Standard Arabic. The benefit of choosing this course is that if you decide to enter a university in Egypt or remain in Egypt, or any other Arab country, post-university then you will be properly equipped to write formal documents and communicate in proper formal Arabic.

I would like to give you a word of warning. This is a challenging course and it is a big jump from GCSE Arabic in Year 9 to this course in Key Stage 4. You need to speak and listen to your Arabic teachers when they give you advice about whether or not this course is suitable for you.

Finally, remember that you cannot take Arabic at IB if you take this course in GCSE. This is because this is a first language course and the IB course is a second language course.

Tawfik Ramses



GCSE ART & DESIGN – Edexcel

Art and Design GCSE is an exciting course concerned with visual and tactile modes of expression. It offers a unique vehicle for communication and self-expression, equivalent in importance to literacy and numeracy.

Throughout the two years of the course, students work on producing a personal portfolio that demonstrates the use of formal elements and creative skills. They learn to give visual form to observations, thoughts, feelings and ideas. They become familiar with a process that allows them to take an idea from its inception to a satisfactory studio outcome.

Students are expected to show annotated visual evidence of their endeavours to extend their ways of seeing the world. They learn to use visual language sensitively and thoughtfully and to contextualise their own work by referencing the work of others to help support their ideas.

They will accomplish this by engaging in the following:

- Broad visual research and investigation of themes, directed by the teacher.
- Experimentation with various materials, equipment and processes.
- Development of ideas from inception to the production of well informed and resolved studio outcomes.
- Making connections between their own work and that of artists and designers from other times and cultures.

This course will be graded on the new grading scale, which means students will be graded from 9 to 1 (where 9 is the top grade) rather than from A* to G. Drawing is a new explicit requirement in GCSE Art and Design, and students will be expected to use drawing to support the development process within their area of study.

“I don't paint things. I only paint the difference between things.”

Henri Matisse

Assessment

1. Personal Portfolio – 60% of the final grade is awarded for the Personal Portfolio.

- The visual investigation and research for this portfolio is done both at home and in the art studio, in both Year 10 and Year 11. This usually takes the form of a sketchbook, and it will also include larger works and clay works. The Portfolio will normally be thematic in nature and delivered as separate units over the two years.
- During class time there will be periods of controlled assessment when students will have the opportunity to produce final outcomes relating to their sketchbook on a larger scale. (These periods will occur at regular intervals over the two years of the course and will always be conducted under controlled conditions).

All Portfolio work done in Years 10 and 11 will be submitted before embarking on the Externally Set Assignment which will be handed out in late February/ early March of Year 11.

2. Externally Set Assignment (ESA) issued by Edexcel – 40%

- This assignment is issued by Edexcel towards the end of the second year of the course (Year 11). It is worth 40% of the final grade.
- Students are presented with a paper giving a thematic title 10 weeks in advance of a timed test.

- Students will use this 10-week period to prepare a broad investigation of the given theme. (This takes the form of a sketchbook full of visual investigations which may be completed at home as well as in the art studio).
- At the end of this period students submit their sketchbooks containing the 10 weeks of investigative work.
- During the timed test, (10 hours usually held over two days), students go on to produce a studio outcome based on their 10 weeks of investigation. They make clear connections between their sketchbook investigations and the outcomes produced during this time.

The Personal Portfolio and ESA are marked by an **Edexcel External Examiner** who comes to Cairo in May (from the UK) to mark all the students' work.

There is an **Annual GCSE Art Exhibition at BISC** celebrating the creativity and skill of all the work completed by the Year 11 Art Students.

If you require any further information about this course or about careers in and using Art and Design please contact Head of Art.

The Student Perspective – Art and Design

At first I was very hesitant about picking Art for one of my GCSE options. Everyone was telling me that it was so hard and time consuming, and that it wouldn't allow me to focus on my other subjects. I was very close to letting others' anxieties get to me, but I decided that it was what I wanted to do. This was because I had to balance my learning, both the educational side and the artistic side.

Art GCSE was a very demanding subject. At first I didn't quite get the hang of it and as GCSE became more demanding towards the end of Year 10, I found it difficult to keep up. It took a lot of my time and energy, but I do not regret picking it as a subject. It was a lesson where there was no precise syllabus to follow or an exact amount that we were each expected to achieve; it was lesson where you were allowed to explore your creativity and build up your initiative and confidence.

Art GCSE really helped me in terms of pushing my boundaries and having a go at things that I never thought I could do. It helped me build a different perspective on how to approach anything I do. I am happy to say that Art GCSE was an excellent choice for me and I recommend it for anyone who is interested in exploring his or her creative side.

By Mona Mettawa



IGCSE BUSINESS STUDIES – Cambridge

The Cambridge IGCSE Business Studies syllabus was created especially for international students, using international business examples and cases studies, rather than focusing mostly on British examples and firms. The Cambridge IGCSE Business Studies course is of a comparable to a standard GCSE in the UK and is accepted as equivalent to UK GCSEs by leading universities worldwide. Upon successful completion of the IGCSE Business Studies course, students will have a good foundation to study either Economics or Business Management at IB level.

Aims and Learning Outcomes

The Business Studies course is designed to encourage students to:

- Apply their knowledge and critical understanding to current issues and problems in a wide range of business contexts.
- Distinguish between facts and opinions, and evaluate qualitative and quantitative data in order to help build.
- arguments and make informed judgements
- Develop knowledge and understanding of the major groups and organisations within and outside business, and consider ways in which they are able to influence objectives, decisions and activities.
- Develop knowledge and understanding of how the main types of businesses are organised, financed and operated, and how their relations with other organisations, consumers, employees, owners and society are regulated.
- Develop skills of numeracy, literacy, enquiry, selection and use of relevant sources of information, presentation and interpretation.

Syllabus Summary

Unit 1: Understanding business activity

Unit 1 focuses on the purpose and nature of business activity and how businesses can be classified. There is emphasis placed on enterprise and entrepreneurs, and why some businesses grow while others remain small.

Unit 2: People in business

Unit 2 focuses on the area of human resources and includes the importance and methods of motivating a workforce. Students will investigate how businesses are organised and managed, and will learn about the methods of recruitment, selection and training of employees.

Unit 3: Marketing

Unit 3 focuses on the role of marketing, the distinctions between niche and mass markets and the techniques of market segmentation. The methods and importance of market research, and the central role of the marketing mix, (the four Ps), is made clear.

Unit 4: Operations Management

Unit 4 focuses on production and includes the meaning and methods of production and how productivity can be increased. The different costs of production and break-even analysis are analysed, as well as the importance of quality and the methods used to achieve it.

Unit 5: Financial information & decisions

Unit 5 covers the need for, and sources of business finance, cash-flow forecasting and working capital. Simple income statements are covered as well as statements of financial position and the analysis of accounts.

Unit 6: External influences on business activity

Unit 6 covers the different external influences on business activity and how these impact on a business. It includes government influences on economic, environmental and ethical issues and how they impact on the functional areas of businesses. In addition, the international economy including globalisation and its effects on businesses and governments, multinational businesses and exchange rates are important issues.

Assessment Overview

The external assessment for this course is in the form of two equally weighted written papers. The first paper consists of 4 questions and is a short answer and data response paper, and the second paper is 4 questions based around a case study which will require analysis of information in a variety of forms.

IGCSE Economics – Cambridge

The Cambridge IGCSE Economics syllabus was created especially for international students, using international examples and cases studies, rather than focusing mostly on British examples. The Cambridge IGCSE Economics course is of a comparable to a standard GCSE in the UK and is accepted as equivalent to UK GCSEs by leading universities worldwide. Upon successful completion of the IGCSE Economics course, students will have a good foundation to study either Economics or Business Management at IB level.

Aims and learning outcomes

The Economics course is designed to encourage students to:

- Know and understand economic terminology, concepts and theories, in order to be economically literate.
 - Use basic economic numeracy and interpret economic data.
 - Use the tools of economic analysis.
 - Express economic ideas logically and clearly in a written form.
- Apply economic understanding to current economic issues in our daily lives.

Syllabus Summary

Unit 1: The basic economic problem

Unit 1 focuses on the essential economic questions of What to produce? How to produce? and for Whom to produce?, the economic factors of production, choices, scarcity, opportunity costs and production possibility curves. Students will gain an understanding of the essential mechanics that work together to create an economy.

Unit 2: The allocation of resources

Unit 2 focuses on the allocation of resources through the price mechanism in a market economy. The market forces of demand and supply, market equilibrium and disequilibrium, and elasticity form the core of this section. Students will analyse graphs, and evaluate the effect of different factors on price, and quantity.

Unit 3: Microeconomics decision makers

Unit 3 focuses on the major microeconomic factors. Student will investigate the importance of banks, households, workers and firms. They will evaluate the role of trade unions, classify the size of firms, evaluate firm costs and revenues and analyse the characteristics of different market structures.

Unit 4: Government and the macroeconomy

Unit 4 focuses on governments and their different macroeconomic aims, and conflicts often arise between the choice of measures used to achieve them. Variables must be measured to consider the causes and consequences of change, and appropriate policies applied.

Unit 5: Economic development

Unit 5 investigates how there will be changes in population, living standards, poverty and income redistribution as an economy develops. Therefore, the effects of changes in the size and structure of population and of other influences on development in a variety of countries are explored.

Unit 6: International trade and globalisation

Unit 6 focuses on the importance of trade between countries and the growth of globalisation is explored. Principles such as specialisation, the role of free trade, the role of multinational companies, foreign exchange rates and balance of payments stability are considered.

Assessment Overview

The external assessment for this course is in the form of two exam papers. The first paper is 30% of the course weight and consists of 30 multiple choice questions. The second paper is weighted at 70% and students must answer 1 compulsory question and a further 3 questions from a choice of 4. The second paper is based around analysing economic scenarios, and is predominantly based around the analysis and evaluation of the source material.

IGCSE COMPUTER SCIENCE – Cambridge

This is an exciting new course for BISC. It reflects the growing importance of computing in the modern world and is designed to equip students with key skills for today's changing workplace.

There's more to Computer Science than simply programming. Computer Science is the study of how computer systems work, how they are constructed and programmed. It consists of a body of knowledge, a set of techniques/methods for solving problems, as well as practical programming skills. What this means is that a course in Computer Science has to cover a lot of theory teaching, as well as plenty of practical problem solving and programming. Computational thinking is a large part of the course and forms the bulk of what is taught.

Aims

The aims are to develop:

- computational thinking, that is thinking about what can be computed and how, and includes consideration of the data required
- understanding of the main principles of solving problems by using computers
- understanding that every computer system is made up of sub-systems, which in turn consist of further sub-systems
- understanding of the component parts of computer systems and how they interrelate, including software, data, hardware, communications and people
- skills necessary to apply understanding to solve computer-based problems using a high-level programming language.

Anyone interested in this course should see the Head of Computing for more details.

Assessment

There are two externally-examined papers:

Components	Content	% of the final grade
Paper 1 Theory 1 hour 45 minutes	75 marks Short answer and structured questions Questions will be based on section 1 of the Subject content All questions are compulsory No calculators are permitted	60%
Paper 2 Problem-solving and Programming 1 hour 45 minutes	50 marks Short answer and structured questions Questions will be based on section 2 of the Subject content All questions are compulsory 20 marks are from questions set on the pre-release material 1 No calculators are permitted	40%

GCSE DRAMA – Edexcel

Why Study GCSE Drama?

It is well recognised that Drama is a highly effective teaching/learning strategy and is invaluable in bringing almost any subject to life for students, which is why it is taught from as early as Key Stage 1. But why choose GCSE Drama?

You will choose this course if you enjoy expressing yourself in an active and exciting way or if you enjoy exploring ideas by putting yourself in other people's shoes. Perhaps you like exploring plays written by other people or take pleasure in the freedom of creating your own drama work. You may find drama a useful outlet for your emotions, thoughts and dreams. If you have enjoyed your previous experience of drama, you may want to develop your skills at a higher level. You probably love performing for an audience. Whatever your reasons are, many of the skills you learn and develop will be highly valued in your future, even if you do not continue to study drama.

The GCSE Drama Course at BISC

Students will learn to:

- Apply knowledge and understanding when making, performing and responding to Drama
- Explore performance texts; understand their social, cultural and historical context
- Develop a range of theatrical skills and apply them to theatre a performance
- Work collaboratively to generate, develop and communicate ideas
- Develop as creative, effective, independent and reflective students
- Contribute as an individual to a theatrical performance
- Reflect on and evaluate their own work and that of others
- Develop an awareness and understanding of the roles and process undertaken in contemporary theatre practice

The course consists of three components:

1. Written exam - 40% - Questions on a set text and a live theatre performance. Notes can accompany the student for the live theatre review.
2. Devised Performance - 40% - A performance piece created from a range of stimuli. A portfolio of photographs, videos, notes and annotations will also form part of this assessment.
3. Text based performance - 20% - Performance of 2 extracts from the chosen text accompanied by a short written explanation of artistic intention.

For the practical components, each student may choose to be assessed as a performer or a designer in one of the technical areas.

The programme of study is planned according to each new group with their interests taken into account when choosing texts and stimuli.

The student perspective - Drama

I've always loved performing, so choosing to take Drama at GCSE was not a difficult decision. It's a subject where you have a lot of freedom to explore your own ideas, especially towards the end of Year 11, and I thought this would help me balance my creative and academic sides. However, Drama isn't purely just acting; it's also about evaluating other performances, reflecting on your own work and expressing these ideas in writing. Drama teaches you so many essential skills that will remain with you throughout your life; you gain so much confidence and strength from this subject, whilst constantly developing your public speaking skills. Therefore, Drama can be applied to any future aspirations, particularly ones where confidence is key, such as law and business management. The subject does require a lot of work and commitment, but in the end it is completely worth it and it provides you with invaluable memories and experiences.

By Caroline Harden



IGCSE ENGLISH LANGUAGE - Cambridge and ENGLISH LITERATURE - Edexcel

English is a compulsory subject for all Year 10 and Year 11 students. The English Department offers an integrated Language and Literature course for all students, leading in most cases to IGCSE certification in English language and English Literature. The integrated course reflects the fact that the two qualifications cover complementary skill.

Students will be assessed by terminal examination (100%) for Language and by terminal examination (60%) and internally assessed coursework (40%) for Literature.

ENGLISH LANGUAGE - Cambridge

Aims

The syllabus is designed to develop a student's ability to understand, and to use effectively, both written and spoken English. Additionally, it aims to encourage the enjoyment of, and a lasting interest in, literature; an ability to understand and respond to a wide range of literary and non-literary material in an informed, personal and critical manner; and to enable students to write fluently and accurately in different styles for a variety of audiences and purposes.

Course Content

Material will include extracts from literature, and extracts from non-literary sources such as newspapers, advertisements, brochures, etc. Students will be required to read, discuss, and analyse these unseen texts and respond to them in a variety of ways.

Assessment

Paper 1: Non Fiction and Transactional Writing (External examination. 2 hours 15 minutes. 60% of the overall award).

- Section A: a variety of short- and longer-answer questions related to a non-fiction text studied in class and a previously unseen extract.
- Section B: one Transactional Writing task, chosen from two questions and addressing a given audience, task or purpose.

Paper 3: Poetry and Prose Texts and Imaginative Writing (Internally assessed coursework. 40% of the overall award)

- Section A: an extended essay analysing the use of linguistic and structural devices in a choice of two literary texts studied in class
- Section B: an extended piece of imaginative writing.

ENGLISH LITERATURE - Edexcel

Aims

The syllabus encourages students to develop an appreciation of literature, both classic and contemporary. It seeks to develop reading for enjoyment; the ability to analyse and comment on key aspects of literary technique; to expose students to literature from various cultures and traditions and to promote emotional and intellectual growth through reading. This course is a compulsory prerequisite to the English A course offered at IB at BISC.

Course Content

The texts will allow students to explore several aspects of literature through in-depth studies and wider reading in the three main genres: prose (novels/short stories and biography), poetry and drama.

Texts to be studied are chosen from a list of Literary Heritage Texts and Different Cultures Prose Texts set by the Examining Board; there is also the choice of an Anthology of materials selected by the Board. Naturally, a certain amount of reading will have to be done outside class and students will be encouraged to maintain good personal reading habits.

Assessment

Paper 1: Poetry and Modern Prose (Examination. Two hours. 60% of overall award)

- Section A: an essay question in which students will be required to analyse an Unseen poem.
- Section B: an essay chosen from a choice of two questions, comparing two poems from the Edexcel anthology which have been studied in class.
- Section C: an essay chosen from a choice of two questions, exploring a set prose text which has been studied in class.

Paper 3: Modern Drama and Literary Heritage Texts. (Internally assessed coursework. 40 % of overall award) Students will have two tasks, set by their teacher, to complete.

- Assignment A: an essay question set on a modern drama text studied in class.
- Assignment B: an essay question set on a prose text from the English literary heritage.

The Examinations

As the IGCSE examination papers are untiered, all students at BISC have the opportunity to aspire to the highest grades in English Literature and Language. Grades continue to be from A*-G in English Language but are now awarded in Literature from 9-1, with a grade 9 representing the highest achievement.

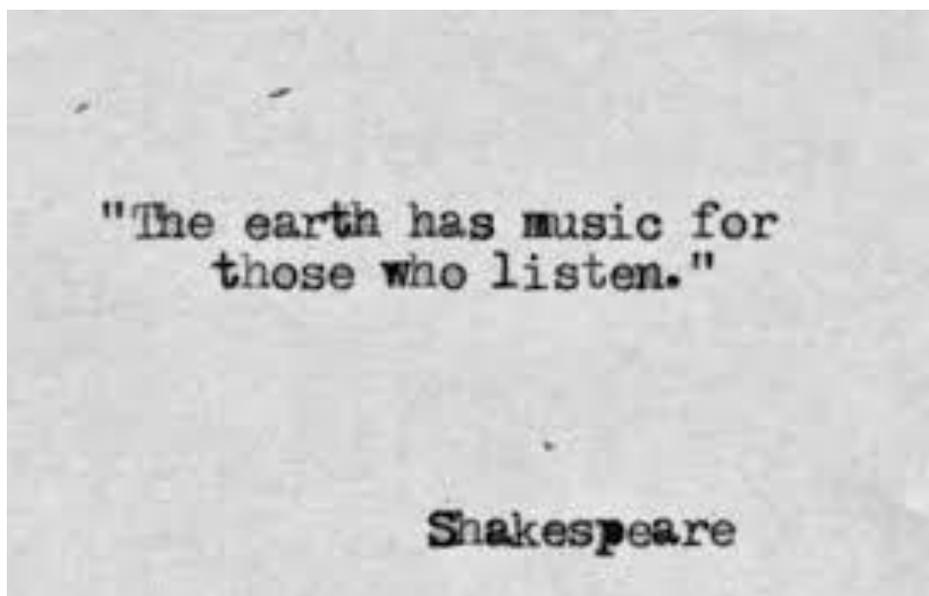
Some students will be offered the option of IGCSE second language qualification in English, as an alternative to the GCSE first language courses. Decisions regarding this course will be based on the student's progress in Key Stage 3 and will be discussed with parents at the end of Year 9.

The Student Perspective

For English, you should expect a lot of analysis of many different works, including plays, poetry and fiction. In my experience, students will read a lot, often independently, and work together in groups or with the teacher's help to find the 'deeper meaning', so to speak. Be ready to contribute your own thoughts on the writer's intentions during class, and for the novels that you will be examined on in Year 11, I would recommend that throughout the year, you keep detailed notes on the characters, relationships, literary techniques and themes. English is an essay-based subject so be prepared to annotate and formulate a plan for an essay independently during the exam. Your annotation skills as well as your quality of writing should improve throughout the course.

English will definitely help you develop your analytical skills, which entails identifying literary techniques and finding their effects, as well as understanding the subtext of a body of work. Studying English will additionally improve your use of language and grammar. But beyond that, it will help you structure coherent arguments to support the points you make, a skill necessary for many disciplines, including history and law.

By Leila Roberts



IGCSE GEOGRAPHY – Edexcel

Why Study Geography IGCSE?

This course is designed for anyone who wants to find out more about the world around them. It will help students to make sense of the human and physical processes that shape the Earth and to explain patterns and processes. As well as acquiring subject knowledge, students will learn a variety of geographical skills, including map skills and graph skills, many of which can be applied in other subjects.

By studying this course, students will:

1. Become effective and independent learners, with critical and enquiring minds.
2. Develop knowledge and understanding of key global geographical issues, such as climate change, the growth of global tourism, and refugees and asylum-seekers.
3. Appreciate the differences and similarities between peoples' views, the environment, societies and cultures.
4. Develop a responsible attitude to the world around them.
5. Apply geographical skills through fieldwork.

Geography is a well-respected academic subject which will look good on any student's academic profile. The course leads naturally into the IB Geography course or to equivalent post-16 courses. Even if students are not considering further study in the subject, many of the skills learned are transferable to other subjects such as Science, Mathematics and English.

The IGCSE Geography course at BISC

Students will study the Edexcel International GCSE (IGCSE) specification in Geography at BISC. The course is accompanied by a textbook written specifically for this syllabus and each student will be issued with a core text. Students need no specific equipment for this subject, apart from the day-to-day basics of a fully stocked pencil case and a calculator.

Students will build up a folder of notes for each topic, including a key word glossary. They will receive revision checklists and topic summaries to help them revise for topic tests. Each unit is assessed by an end of topic test and regular assessment, in the form of presentations and projects, will take place throughout each topic.

Structure of the course

Sections	Content	% of the final grade
A. The Natural Environment	Two of the three topics are studied: <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. River environments2. Coastal environments3. Hazardous environments	28%
B. People and their Environment	Two of the three topics are studied: <ol style="list-style-type: none">4. Economic activity and energy5. Ecosystems and rural environments6. Urban environments	28%
C. Practical Geographical Enquiry	The development of practical geographical enquiry skills related to the investigation of each selected topic from Sections A and B.	28%
D. Global Issues	One of the three topics are studied: <ol style="list-style-type: none">7. Fragile environments8. Globalisation and migration9. Development and human welfare	16%

Assessment

This is a linear course; students will take one 3-hour examination at the end of the two-year course.

The single tier of entry will contain a variety of question types, such as multiple-choice questions, short and extended answer questions, graphical and data questions and practical enquiry questions.

There is no Controlled Assessment but students will undertake various types of fieldwork throughout the course.

The Student Perspective

Geography in gives you the chance to learn about both the physical and human aspects of the world. In Year 11, you go on a trip to obtain primary research for your fieldwork; when we were studying the impacts of tourism, we travelled to Luxor to question tourists and the locals on their own personal experiences with tourism in Egypt, which was a fascinating encounter.

Geography can be seen as the study of everything; it takes into account history, science, human rights, social sciences and much more. Through the study of case studies on each topic, you gain precise knowledge on the issues that affect different cultures and countries e.g. anti-natalist policy in China and its impacts on the population, volcanic eruptions and the long term and short term effects on an island in the Philippines.

After the Geography course, you will have gained key skills in map reading as well as knowledge of major events that have had huge impacts on the world. Geography keeps up with the latest news on natural disasters and other human events; it is an up to date subject as it always has to take into account the latest events around the world which personally interested me.

By Sofia Burdett



IGCSE HISTORY – Cambridge

Why study History?

“How do you know who you are unless you know where you’ve come from? How can you tell what’s going to happen, unless you know what’s happened before? History isn’t just about the past. It’s about why we are who we are – and about what’s next.”

Tony Robinson, Actor and Television Presenter.

History is the study of real people living real lives and experiencing real situations. It helps us to understand the people around us and also those from different backgrounds and cultures.

History challenges us to form solidly based arguments and to share our opinions with confidence – crucial skills in the modern world and workplace.

History has consistently remained a relevant and well respected subject that is recognised by leading universities and employers throughout the world. The knowledge and skills developed in History are applicable in a wide range of jobs.

History graduates have entered into all kinds of careers; they make excellent lawyers, detectives, politicians, diplomats, journalists and managers of all descriptions.

Subject Content

Through the study of this course, students will develop knowledge and understanding of:

- The key individuals, societies, developments and issues in the periods studied.
- The links between events of the past and current events.
- Historical events at different scales.
- The process of change, both long and short term.

Knowledge and Understanding

By the end of the course, students will be able to:

- Make connections and comparisons between different aspects of the periods, themes and topics studied.
- Describe, analyse, and evaluate the causes and consequences of historical events and situations.
- Describe, analyse, and evaluate changes and developments in the periods, themes and topics studied.

Paper 1 is a written examination. It is 40% of the total IGCSE and is 2 hours long. It involves 5 units of study and a depth study on Germany.

Course content for Section A - Available modules

- How fair were the peace treaties of 1919-1923?
- How successful was the League of Nations between 1919 and 1939?
- Why had international peace collapsed by 1939?
- Whose fault was the Cold War between 1945 and 1949?
- How successfully did America contain the spread of Communism in Korea, Cuba and Vietnam?
- Why did the USSR and Communism collapse by 1991?
- Why were events in the Gulf important between 1970 and 2000?

Course content for Section B - Depth Study on Germany

- Weimar Germany, 1919-1934
- Nazi Germany, 1934-1945

Paper 2 is a written examination. It is 33% of the total IGCSE and is 2 hours in length. The paper consists of one unit of study and six different types of source based questions. It will be chosen from one of the following units:

- How fair were the peace treaties of 1919-1923?
- How successful was the League of Nations between 1919 and 1939?
- Why had international peace collapsed by 1939?
- Whose fault was the Cold War between 1945 and 1949?
- How successfully did America contain the spread of Communism in Korea, Cuba and Vietnam?
- Why did the USSR and Communism collapse by 1991?
- Why were events in the Gulf important between 1970 and 2000?

Paper 3 is an historical investigation (coursework). It is worth 27% of the total and will be a 2,000 word essay on a chosen topic from the Germany Depth Study. Students will choose their question from an extensive list of options. They will write it on the significance of one aspect of either:

- Weimar Germany, 1919-1934
- Or
- Nazi Germany, 1934-1945

The Student Perspective

I really enjoyed taking History because it was definitely the subject that I felt provided me with skills that I could use not only in History, but in many other aspects as well. Studying History sharpened my research skills, critical thinking abilities, and it helped me organise and communicate information. It also improved my ability to construct an argument and question the reliability of sources effectively. It serves as a great foundation for anyone who wants to pursue a career in law, politics, journalism or international relations, because of the skills it provides.

It goes without saying that the subject places a huge emphasis on reading and writing, as students are expected to do a lot of reading and cross-referencing of information, and then communicate it effectively to construct an argument. This can be overwhelming at times, as students may not be used to this sort of depth from their study of History in Key Stage 3, but it should be noted that if students are willing to keep up with their reading and put effort into their written work, they will definitely do well and develop transferable skills.

In summary, you should take this subject if you have a genuine interest in the issues History deals with, such as racism, war and power, and if you are intrigued by the idea of how and why the world came to be as it is today.

By Massa Hassanein



IGCSE MATHEMATICS – Edexcel

Aims

The general aims of the programme are to develop logical thought; develop skills in devising, using and presenting mathematical arguments and critical analysis; develop creativity and persistence in the approach to problem solving; and to gain confidence in applying and using mathematical skills acquired. It is also to prepare students for the study of Mathematics post sixteen.

Course Content

The IGCSE Mathematics syllabus has two levels of entry – Foundation and Higher, and it does not feature any Controlled Assessments. *This course starts formally at the start of Year 9.*

Students at BISC are usually entered for Higher level, Foundation level being used only in exceptional circumstances. For all levels of entry, the syllabus is split into four sections - Number, Algebra, Geometry and Statistics - but there is significantly more content in the Higher level than there is in the Foundation level.

Students who show sound mathematical ability will cover a variety of more demanding topics and problems, including the use of graphic calculators, to prepare them for the challenges of sixth form study of mathematics.

IGCSE CONTENT, Foundation (highest grade possible C): revision of all work covered in Years 7-8; the use of approximation and choosing the appropriate degree of accuracy; using standard form; evaluating formulae; using symbolic notation to express the rules of sequences; simple algebraic manipulations and equations; interpreting graphs which represent particular relationships; loci; calculations in plane and solid shapes; organising and analysing data; basic probability; the design and use of a questionnaire to test a hypothesis; constructing and interpreting cumulative frequency curves.

IGCSE CONTENT, HIGHER(highest grade possible A*): As above with the following additional material: sets and Venn diagrams, rational and irrational numbers; upper and lower bounds of calculations; expressing general laws in symbolic form; functions; solving equations using graphical methods; transformations of functions; equations of circles; non-linear simultaneous equations; investigating sequences including iteration; harder algebraic manipulation; vectors; trigonometry in three dimensions; histograms; function notation; calculus; conditional probability; the probability of two events happening.

IGCSE Further Pure: This is an additional higher level maths course offered to students who wish to study maths at IB Higher Level. It is an extremely demanding course that stretches the brightest of students. It is, however, a very good grounding for HL Maths. The course consists of extensions of all pure mathematics topics outlined above.

Further Pure is only suitable for set 1 students.

Assessment

There are two written papers of equal difficulty and weighting. Both papers are calculator papers. Both papers have equal weighting of 50%. Foundation Level allows students to gain grades C, D, E, F, G while entry at Higher Level allows students to gain grades A*, A, B, C and D. All examinations are sat in May/June of Year 11

The Student Perspective

Maths, like English and Science, is a core subject at school, which we must all study up until IB level. Maths is a key aspect in all areas of life. It is one of the best subjects to develop your analytical, research and problem solving skills. The skills you learn are of great benefit in other GCSE subjects such as Physics, Chemistry, ICT, Business, Geography etc. Students often feel that Mathematics is “not for them” but I strongly believe that Maths is for everyone. Even though it can be very challenging at times, you can learn to really appreciate its clarity and the fact that its nature allows you to know exactly when you are right. All it takes to do well in IGCSE Maths is hard work and full dedication to the subject. The extra time, additional practice, further consolidation and development of techniques will contribute to improved results and hopefully an achievement grade of A/A*.

In Set 1 you sit an additional Further Pure Maths Papers in addition to the 2 mandatory GCSE papers. Further Pure Maths is a challenging course, which extends beyond the material you learned at IGCSE. It was obviously quite tough and thereby came with a heavier workload; nonetheless, if you are anything like me and have a passion for Mathematics you will find that it is very interesting and extremely rewarding. It really broadens your skills and promotes deeper mathematical thinking.

Maths is so much more than just a mandatory subject; the career possibilities are endless. People with Maths qualifications can go into economics, accounting, medicine, engineering, business and so much more.

By Mariam el Mallawany

Modern Foreign Languages – IGCSE

FRENCH and SPANISH – Edexcel

Why Study French or Spanish at IGCSE level?

In our modern and global society, it is essential to study a foreign language. It is also a requirement should students wish to study a language at an advanced level (IB). Studying a foreign language enables students to communicate in a variety of contexts and demonstrates an understanding and appreciation of different cultures.

During this course, students will develop:

- Knowledge of vocabulary and grammatical structures.
- The ability to communicate effectively in a variety of contexts in the language.
- Transferable language learning skills.
- An awareness and understanding of countries and communities where the language is spoken.

The IGCSE French/Spanish course at BISC

Some aspects of the IGCSE have already been introduced in Year 9. The course in Years 10 and 11, which covers a wide variety of topics, both reinforces and builds on the vocabulary, expressions, and grammatical rules, enabling students to operate confidently in a range of work and social situations.

The IGCSE course follows the Edexcel Board and consists of three units based on the following skills: listening, speaking, reading and writing. The course provides breadth, stretch and challenge and it enables students to show what they know, understand and can do within a clearly defined list of topic and sub-topic areas.

Structure of the course

Topics	Sub-topics
A. Home and abroad	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Life in the town and rural life2. Holidays, tourist information and directions3. Services (e.g. bank, post office)*4. Customs5. Everyday life, traditions and communities
B. Education and employment	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. School life and routine2. School rules and pressure3. School trips, events and exchanges4. Work, career and volunteering5. Future plans
C. Personal life and relationships	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. House and home2. Daily routines and helping at home3. Role models*4. Relationships with family and friends5. Childhood*

D. The world around us	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Environmental issues 2. Weather and climate* 3. Travel and transport 4. The media 5. Information and communication technology
E. Social activities, fitness and health	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Special occasions 2. Hobbies, interests, sports and exercise 3. Shopping and money matters 4. Accidents, injuries, common ailments and health issues* 5. Food and drink

Sub-topics A3, C3, C5, D2 and E4 will not be assessed in Paper 3: Speaking.

Assessment

The IGCSE provides:

- written assessment in listening, reading and writing skills
- assessment rubrics in both English and the target language in both Paper 1 and Paper 2
- assessment of spoken language
- 100% external assessment.

Unit	Assessment	Weight
Paper 1: Listening	30-minute examination paper, plus five minutes' reading time. Total marks: 40	25%
Paper 2: Reading and Writing	1h 45-minute examination paper. <u>Reading</u> : five tasks, each based around a collection of short texts or a longer single text. One literary text. Total marks reading: 40 <u>Writing</u> : two writing tasks and a third grammar-based task. First writing task around 60-75 words, including four prescribed words or short phrases. Second writing between 130-150 words: students will be able to choose from three questions. Total marks writing: 40	50%
Paper 3: Speaking	8-10 minutes Part 1: picture presentation followed by questions on the picture. Part 2: two conversations about two different topics, chosen at random by Edexcel. Total marks: 40	25%

The Student Perspective - Spanish

Spanish covers a range of really interesting topics, including 'el tiempo libre' (leisure time), 'las vacaciones' (the holidays), 'las profesiones' (occupations), and many more. Mrs Sanchez, who is a native Spanish speaker, makes the subject fun and interesting. She is always available if you have any questions.

You might think: "How will this subject benefit me?" Remember - Spanish is one of the most commonly spoken languages in the world and it is the official language in over twenty countries, including Spain, Cuba and Mexico. Therefore, it is an extremely useful language to learn, especially if you are considering travelling, studying or perhaps working in these countries in the future.

Another important thing is that you will be able to use several different websites, e.g. 'Linguascope' and 'Wikispaces', where you can find interactive activities, videos and even put your homework on. The sites are easily accessible to both teachers and students. For me, someone who loves languages, it was a very beneficial and enjoyable subject, and I can definitely recommend it.

By Christina Wuellner

The Student Perspective - French

I chose French because it was a subject I enjoyed and genuinely wanted to learn. As the course progressed it allowed me to develop my writing, understanding and speaking skills. This is the reason I particularly liked the course because these are the essentials required in order to be able to become fluent in a language. You are never asked to learn things which will not directly influence your comprehension of the language. For example, you are not assessed directly on grammar; instead it is assessed in the context of your writing.

French is a subject that you have probably been taking for many years by now. However, that does not mean that you should underestimate the subject. My advice to you is to constantly keep your notes up to date, especially those on grammar because grammar is the foundation of your writing, and even at IB level, you are constantly expanding your grammar knowledge.

French was one of my favourite subjects because, personally, I am fascinated by the language. On top of that, the course itself is designed to allow you to study and talk about any field or topic you like. For example, you could talk about sport activities, your holidays, your school life; the syllabus gives you the chance to broaden your horizons and not just learn about the language, but also the country itself. I remember learning things about the French culture that were completely different to the Egyptian culture.

In short, I would advise everyone to take French because not only are you learning a new and beautiful language, you are also learning about a completely new culture and one which I am sure will captivate you.

By Salma About Fadl



GCSE MUSIC – Edexcel

GCSE Music at BISC is fun, lively and stimulating, and offers many opportunities to collaborate, improvise and perform. Students opting to take this subject already either play an instrument, or take voice lessons.

At a glance - What is the GCSE Music course about?

GCSE Music covers three main areas of expertise: appraising, composing and performing music. Candidates will study a wide range of styles and genres including popular, world and classical music. There will also be opportunities to gain skills in music technology.

Who will enjoy this course?

Students will enjoy GCSE Music if they are interested in:

- Creativity
- Working with others
- Listening to all kinds of music
- Playing in ensembles such as bands, choirs or rock groups, and taking part in workshops or competitions
- How computers are used in music
- Understanding the relationship between music and society

How does it follow on from Music in KS3?

Students have already gained experience of composing and performing in a variety of different styles and genres. They will now build upon their knowledge by learning more about how various kinds of music came into being, and how and why they were written or performed.

The Edexcel GCSE Music Course Content

Component 1 - Students undertake an engaging study of eight set works, designed to nurture in-depth musical understanding. This encompasses the classical repertoire, popular styles, music from stage and screen, and musical cultures from around the world.

Component 2 - Students perform together and strive to raise the standard of their own instrumental work.

Component 3 - Students create original music of their own, often using software as tool to aid the process.

Assessment

The majority (60%) of the examination grade is based on successful coursework. This means that students will have chance to refine and improve their work as they go along, before submitting it for final assessment. The areas assessed in this manner are:

Performance (Controlled assessment) 30%

Candidates will need to play one solo piece and one ensemble piece. These need not be performed on the same instrument.

Composition (Controlled assessment) 30%

Candidates will create two original compositions, of their own choice.

The examination (40%)

In addition to the coursework, candidates will sit one **Listening Examination**, which will take place at the end of Year 11. They will complete a 90 minute paper which will be based upon the eight prescribed set works. Questions on this paper typically ask candidates to aurally identify instruments or features of an extract of music, or to express opinions backed up by musical reasoning.

The Student Perspective

GCSE Music is collaboration between musical theory and practical compositions, which teaches you new skills such as composing on garage band and sight reading. The theory that you will study includes the baroque, classical and romantic periods and on top of this, you will also gain insight into music from other countries and musicals, which provides you with a valuable and broad sense of cultural awareness.

I really enjoyed being involved in playing and making music, because it helped me gain more self-confidence by performing in front of a crowd. Through music, you also develop your social and team-working skills, which will be extremely beneficial in all aspects of your future life, no matter what career you chose to pursue. Even though GCSE Music is a great building block to a future in music, it provides you with so many other skills, thereby making it a universal subject, that I recommend that everyone should take.

By Khadija Binladen



IGCSE PHYSICAL EDUCATION – Cambridge

Aims

The syllabus aims to:

- develop students' knowledge and understanding of the theory underpinning physical performance in a modern world.
- use and apply this knowledge and understanding to improve their performance.
- perform in a range of physical activities, developing skills and techniques and selecting and using tactics, strategies and/or compositional ideas.
- understand and appreciate safe practice in physical activity and sport.
- understand and appreciate the benefit of physical activity and sport for health, fitness and well-being.
- gain a sound basis for further study in the field of Physical Education.

Overview of the GCSE in Physical Education

Subject content:

- Anatomy and physiology
- Health, fitness and training
- Skill acquisition and psychology
- Social, cultural and ethical influences

Components	Content	% of final grade
Written Exam Paper:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 1 hour 45 minute written paper• 100 marks• Combination of short answer and extended writing questions• All theory topics covered• Externally assessed	50%
Practical performance:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 100 marks• Internal assessment, external moderation• Candidates undertake four physical activities from at least two of the seven categories listed.	50%

Activity List

Students will need to select four activities from at least two different sections below:

Category	Activities
1. Games	Association Football
	Badminton
	Baseball, Rounders or Softball
	Basketball
	Cricket
	Golf
	Handball
	Hockey
	Lacrosse
	Netball
	Rugby League or Rugby Union
	Squash
	Table Tennis
	Tennis
Volleyball	
2. Gymnastic Activities	Artistic gymnastics (floor and vault) or Rhythmic gymnastics
	Individual figure skating
	Trampolining
3. Dance Activities	Dance
4. Athletic Activities	Cross-Country Running
	Cycling
	Rowing and Sculling
	Track and Field Athletics
	Weight Training for Fitness
5. Outdoor and Adventurous Activities	Canoeing
	Hill Walking or Orienteering
	Horse Riding
	Mountain Biking
	Rock Climbing • Sailing
	Skiing or Snowboarding
	Windsurfing
6. Swimming	Competitive Swimming
	Life Saving or Personal Survival
	Water Polo
7. Combat Activities	Judo or Taekwondo

What does it take to be a GCSE PE student?

- You DO need to be a talented sports person to take this subject, and have a healthy interest in sport.
- You need to be playing sport regularly, in school and/or outside of school.
- It is academically rigorous and requires students who are able to adapt to a number of different learning and assessment styles from short answers and interviews to practicals.
- Above all we are looking for students who are willing to work to the best of their ability and achieve their best possible grade.

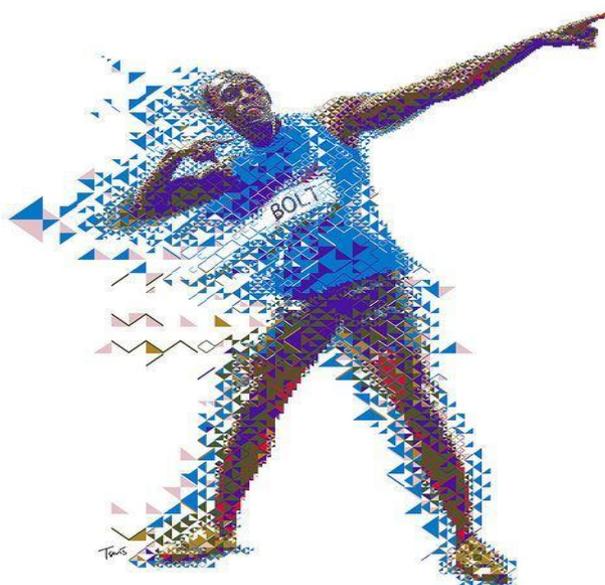
The Student Perspective

PE GCSE is course offered at BISC where students can apply their athletic and sporting abilities to achieve a grade. Like most courses, the PE GCSE course stretches out over a two year time period, during which the students will learn to enhance their sporting and athletic capabilities whilst learning the theory for the examination.

This is a very rewarding course as BISC is known for producing talented athletes and very capable scholars, both of these skill sets are tested over this course. PE GCSE is also considered a scientific course as well so it's a great opportunity for students to have a top-grade science on their applications or résumés.

Personally, I chose PE GCSE as I was passionate about the sports I took part in, many of which were on offer for this course. I wanted to enhance my physical capabilities, as well as my knowledge of the body and how it functioned. Luckily it seems that I had made the right decision. The theory is interesting and the sport is fun!

By Mourad Galal



GCSE SCIENCE COURSES – AQA

Why Study Science GCSE?

Science is fundamental to understanding the modern scientific and technological world we live in today. We give academic rigour to our science courses, providing strong academic results at GCSE and giving a firm platform for the study of Science at IB level.

Next year, due to the changes in the curriculum we will be introducing a new Science Course called Combined Science Trilogy. This course incorporates Biology, Chemistry and Physics and will allow students to choose to continue any of these subjects at IB HL level, if their grades are high enough. This is equivalent to two GCSEs and will be awarded using the new grading system of 1-9 as opposed to A*-G. This qualification is linear. Linear means that students will sit all their exams at the end of the course which is at the end of Year 11.

Aims

A course based on this specification should encourage candidates to:

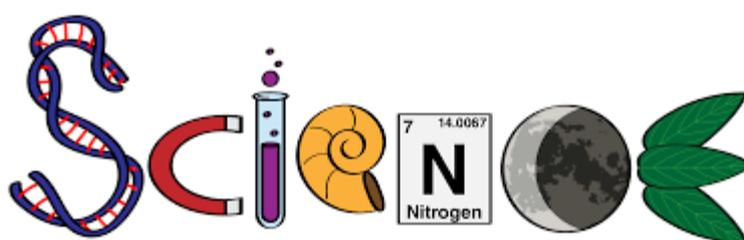
- Develop their interest in, and enthusiasm for, science;
- Develop a critical approach to scientific evidence and methods;
- Acquire and apply skills, knowledge and understanding of how science works and its essential role in society;
- Acquire scientific skills, knowledge and understanding necessary for progression to further learning.

Assessments

There are six papers: Two Biology, Two Chemistry and Two Physics. Each of the papers will assess knowledge and understanding from distinct topic areas from the subject content that is listed below. Each paper is worth 16.67% and there will be no Controlled Assessment (coursework) contribution. However, students will have to complete 16 required experiments.

Subject content

Biology	Chemistry	Physics
1. Cell biology	8. Atomic structure and the periodic table	18. Forces
2. Organisation	9. Bonding, structure, and the properties of matter	19. Energy
3. Infection and response	10. Quantitative chemistry	20. Waves
4. Bioenergetics	11. Chemical changes	21. Electricity
5. Homeostasis and response	12. Energy changes	22. Magnetism and electromagnetism
6. Inheritance, variation and evolution	13. The rate and extent of chemical change	23. Particle model of matter
7. Ecology	14. Organic chemistry	24. Atomic structure
	15. Chemical analysis	
	16. Chemistry of the atmosphere	
	17. Using resources	



The Student Perspective

Biology

Biology is the study of life and living organisms, yet it is so much more. Studying Biology is really interesting; however, it is also one of the hardest subjects. Something that stood out to me while studying Biology was the vast amount of variety in the subject: one day is spent focusing on the human body, the next is focused on the ecosystem and environment around us. This always keeps you on your toes and you always look forward to your next Biology lesson - it always keeps you excited and intrigued in your daily learning objectives. The excitement in itself is a reason to take this subject.

Another reason is the fact that you can actually observe the material you study in class around you. It's not just abstract ideas and equations, it's right there in front of you and it's there for you to observe. If you are interested in becoming a doctor, forensic scientist, veterinarian, botanist, marine biologist, scientist or any other of the careers that require Biology, it speaks for itself. However, Biology does require a lot of hard work and focus. The ideas introduced in Biology have to be understood completely and also have to be remembered completely as well. This is not an easy subject and will require a lot of work for the best results. The student should expect a lot of studying, note taking/making and a lot of focus and concentration in lessons.

Taking Biology will allow you to understand the natural world around you and will help introduce the topic to you if you wish to study it further, or want to pursue a career that requires Biology. My most memorable experiences taking Biology would be the amount of cool experiments we would do, from dissecting a cow's heart to how nutrients are transported in a plant. And finally, my only piece of advice is to enjoy your lessons in Biology – but take them very seriously!

By Alexander Vlad Emanoil

Chemistry

GCSE Chemistry rocks! A brief overview of the content includes the nature of substances and how they react together, the applications of chemistry in the real world, the effect of raw materials in fuels and manufacturing on the global and local environment. This is really useful if you later decide to study economics or geography. It also broadens your knowledge of the world around you and makes you aware of how the economy functions. Another advantage of chemistry is that many of the topics you'll study will overlap with biology (molecular biology) and physics (nuclear fission and atoms). Chemistry is an ideal subject to take if you want a future in anything related to medicine, such as neuroscience, bio-chemistry, chemical engineering, biology and so on.

By Hadeer Ibrahim

Physics

Physics is one of the three main branches of science and literally, it means nature but in a broader sense, it encompasses every aspect of how the world works, from the interactions between molecules to the eruption of massive supernovae ten times the size of our sun. Although you might not be taking that sort of stuff in GCSE, it is no doubt a gateway for those who are curious because it gives you a basis that you can take forward into every subject and aspect in life. Put simply, if you understand how the world works, then you'll utilise that knowledge to make it work for you. Physics is probably the subject that uses the most

maths (except for maths) and because of that, combined with the concepts taught, it is difficult to an extent – but it is logical and makes sense. Like all sciences, Physics teaches us how the world works, in terms of the numerous processes that enable the universe to exist, and it teaches you to be critical of everything and not to take anything for granted. This subject might enable you to view the world in a different light, because with understanding and knowledge comes a change in view and in a sense, for some, this understanding might give the world more substance and beauty. It is, like all sciences, our educated guess of how everything works.

Advice for Physics is much like all subjects in GCSE and in IB (or anything for that matter). Study, work hard, achieve (and bring your calculator). Simple if done right. There are no Physics trips per se (other than the journey for knowledge am I right?) but it is an experience, as it provides the potential to experience things. Before taking Physics, you might look up at the stars and only admire their beauty at face value but after taking Physics, you then learn that going on in these stars, light years away, where the light from there at this moment hasn't even reached us, are mass nuclear fusion factories that, combined with supernovae, produce everything in the universe, including life (that's you by the way) because after all, we are all made of star stuff. That means that the molecules that once made up galaxies and those that made dinosaurs are the same ones that are in your brain as you process this very piece of information. Don't you think that's cool (I know I do).

By Ibrahim Abouelfettouh