



## Academics

Here at the British International School of Houston, we aspire to transform the lives of each of our students. Our learning programme consists of five key elements that offers a rich and balanced learning experience that meets the needs of our students, develops them both academically and holistically and prepares them fully for anything.

The word “curriculum” can represent a multitude of ideas in the minds of teachers, parents and students. For many, the word curriculum is synonymous with the academic part of a school and will see this as a checklist of subjects and topics that are worked through. Others might even view academics or the academic curriculum as a programme of experiences for students to work through as they progress through school.

At the British International School of Houston, we view Academics as a key and integral part of our learning programme that seeks to empower and support our students as they set out to achieve the highest possible academic goals and prepare for a successful life both in school and beyond.

We recognize that each phase of our school is distinctly different and our academic programme is tailored to meet the developmental needs of our students within each phase. In our Early Years we seek to lay the best possible foundation, our Primary School is focused on creating the best possible environment for growth, our Middle School looks to develop the best possible learners and our High School sets out to deliver the best possible outcomes.

On the following pages you will find an overview of our academic programme in each phase of our school. For more detailed information please go to **[bish-public.rubiconatlas.org](https://public.rubiconatlas.org)** and enter the password: **academics**. You will then be able to browse all of our published units by either grade level or subject area.



# Academics in our Primary School

In the Primary School, our learning programme is centered around each student discovering who they are and their place in the world, both as a learner and as an individual. We believe the experiences learners have in Primary School should be centred around developing curiosity, exploring the world through play and should be relevant and based in the real world. Student learning should support meaningful interactions with their peers and adults.

The Primary School follows a holistic, inquiry-based approach to learning. The Primary learning programme is designed to ensure our students feel supported, challenged, and inspired as well as to provide ample opportunities to discover who they are and how they learn. Students learn to value the role they play in the learning process through reflecting on their progress and setting their learning targets with the guidance of our Leader Learner Profile. Students are supported as they develop their self-esteem by embracing both success and failure as a pathway to learning. Effort and engagement are valued and nurtured as we provide opportunities for all students to succeed.

We utilize the following respected curriculum to ensure our students' diverse needs are met and their personal experiences are recognized and respected.

- National Curriculum for England (2014): Mathematics, English and Science objectives
- International Primary Curriculum (IPC): foundation subjects of Geography, History, Society Studies, International Studies, and Art and Design
- Specialist Teachers: Language Acquisition, Performing Arts and Physical Education
- Personal, Social and Emotional Educational programme: development of values related to Personal Identity, Relationships and Well-Being

# Academics in our Primary School

At BISH, our Primary curriculum:

- Develops curiosity by asking questions to guide learning
- Uses information technology to enhance learning
- Encourages students to take the first steps to become independent learners
- Provides authentic learning opportunities and real-world experiences which prepare them for the next phase of school and beyond
- Fosters an ethos of collaboration between students, staff and parents to deepen understanding
- Encourages students to deepen their thinking and reflect on the next steps in their learning



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# Academics in our Middle School

At BIS Houston we recognize that Middle School is a phenomenally exciting time when our students make critical life choices about who they are, how they work, what they aspire to be and how they intend to get there.

Our learning programme is designed to ensure our students feel supported, challenged, inspired and that they have ample opportunities to learn who they are and how they learn, while being exposed to a broad, balanced and rigorous academic programme that provides as many opportunities as possible for their next stage at school. We also believe that Middle School should be about inspiration, passion, curiosity, trial and error, personal discovery and creating opportunities.

Below you will see an outline of each element of both the academic and enrichment programmes that ensure our students benefit from a broad, challenging and rich experience that truly helps them to develop into the best possible learners.

For each year group in Middle School, the academic programme is comprised of eight compulsory courses and one of the available elective language courses.

Compulsory Courses – Middle School (Years 7, 8 and 9)		
English	Mathematics	Performing Arts – Dance, Drama and Music
Humanities	PE	PSHE
Science	Design Thinking	

Elective Language Acquisition Courses – Middle School (Years 7, 8 and 9)
Choose 1
French
Spanish
Mandarin Chinese <i>(Year 7 Only)</i>



# Academics in our *Middle School*

Our Enrichment programme provides authentic learning opportunities that build upon and deepen the learning in our academic programme. We believe that there should be clear and explicit links between our enrichment activities and our academic programme as we seek to add to, enhance and enrich the learning experience for each of our students.

At Middle School, we take this one step further by ensuring that all Enrichment activities provide a breadth of experiences aligned with our leader and learner profile. We believe that as students develop each of these attributes they are empowered to grow and become truly outstanding learners.



Enrichment Courses – Year 7	Enrichment Courses – Year 8	Enrichment Courses – Year 9
<b>Inquirer</b>	<b>Thinker</b>	<b>Principled</b>
L2L / Coding	Global Justice League	Global Justice League
L2L / Coding	Performance	
MS Publications	Art Imagery	Outdoor Education
<b>Learner</b>	<b>Creative</b>	<b>Communicator</b>
Mi- Learning	Robotics	Performance
Outdoor Education	Global Justice League	MS Publications
	Robotics	
<b>Open-minded</b>	<b>Risk-taker</b>	<b>Reflective</b>
Global Justice League	Structures	Personal Project Exhibition
Performance	MS Publications	
Art Imagery	Outdoor Education	

# Academics in our High School

Building upon our commitment in Middle School to develop the best possible learners, students enter our High School with a range of skills and experiences ready to focus on achieving the best possible outcomes.

At the British International School of Houston, High School students focus on the development of their individuality as well as academic achievements that rank amongst the best globally. This development of the whole individual allows students to translate their knowledge into action and contribute to the world on a local, regional and international level, and also promotes the skills and attributes necessary for success in a constantly evolving world.

Our academic programme in Years 10 and 11 consists of four compulsory courses alongside four elective options to be selected from a choice of fourteen courses. All of the eighteen courses on offer last for two academic years and can be completed through either an external or internal examination series in the summer term of Year 11.

Compulsory Courses – Year 10 and Year 11			
English Language	World Literature	Mathematics	BISH Core
Elective Courses – Year 10 and Year 11			
Choose 1	Choose 1	Choose 1	Choose 1
French	Geography	Biology Chemistry Physics (Triple Award)	Art and Design
	History		Design Technology
Spanish			Drama
	Economics	Coordinated Science (Double Award)	Music
			PE
Sociology			Computer Science

All external examinations in Year 11 are accredited by the Cambridge Assessment International Education organization in the United Kingdom and the students receive an International General Certificate of Secondary Education (IGCSE) for each successfully completed course. For students that do not require the IGCSE qualification for their next academic destination, they can choose to complete internal examinations that are set, marked and moderated here at BIS Houston. Upon the successful completion of the internal examination series, students receive credits towards our BIS Houston High School Diploma which captures their academic performance over the four year High School programme (Years 10, 11, 12 and 13).

# Academics in our *High School* continued

Our academic programme in Years 12 and 13 consists of two pathways, both with a number of options available. The first option is the International Baccalaureate Diploma Programme (IBDP) and the second option is our Graduating Electives Programme (GEP).

The IBDP is a demanding academic programme, widely recognized to be the most challenging course of study currently available to students between 16 and 18 years of age and highly valued by universities throughout the world.

Scored out of 45 points, the IBDP requires students to select a course in each of the following six subject groups:

Group 1 – Studies in language and literature

Group 2 – Language acquisition

Group 3 – Individuals and society

Group 4 – Sciences

Group 5 – Mathematics

Group 6 – \* The Arts

\* Students may opt to study an additional sciences, individuals and societies, or languages course, instead of a course in the arts.

# Academics in our *High School* continued

Students will take some subjects at higher level (HL) and some at standard level (SL). Each student takes at least three (but not more than four) subjects at higher level, and the remaining at standard level. Standard level subjects take up 150 teaching hours over the duration of the two year programme and Higher level comprises 240 teaching hours.

Students must also complete three core elements to graduate with the full IB diploma. The DP core aims to broaden students' educational experience and challenge them to apply their knowledge and skills. These core elements are:

- The Extended Essay (EE) – which is an independent, self-directed piece of research, finishing with a 4,000-word paper
- Theory of Knowledge (ToK) – students reflect on the nature of knowledge and on how we know what we claim to know
- Creativity, Activity, Service (CAS) – in which students complete a project related to those three concepts

On the next page you will see the subjects available to study on our IBDP for students starting year one of the programme in August 2020. Once selected these options are for the full duration of the two year programme of study.



# Academics in our *High School* continued

International Baccalaureate Diploma Programme (IBDP) – Year 12 and Year 13						
IBDP Core	Group 1	Group 2	Group 3	Group 4	Group 5	Group 6
Extended Essay, Theory of Knowledge, CAS	Language A: literature (SL/HL)		Geography (SL/HL)	Environmental systems and societies (SL)	Mathematics: analysis and approaches (SL/HL)	Visual Arts (SL/HL)
		Spanish A: Literature (SL/HL)	History (SL/HL)	Chemistry (SL/HL)	Mathematics: applications and interpretation (SL/HL)	Film (SL/HL)
			Economics (SL/HL)	Physics (SL/HL)		Music (SL/HL)
	Language A: language and literature (SL/HL)	French B (SL/HL)	Business Management (SL/HL)	Design Technology (SL/HL)		Theatre (SL/HL)
		Spanish B (SL/HL)	Psychology (SL/HL)	Sports, exercise and health science (SL/HL)		Computer Science (SL/HL)
		German B (SL/HL)		Biology (SL/HL)		Biology (SL/HL)
	Literature and performance (SL)	Spanish ab Initio (SL)				Chemistry <u>OR</u> Physics (SL/HL) <i>(One option depending on numbers)</i>
		Mandarin ab Initio (SL)				Economics (SL/HL)
		German ab initio (SL)				

All courses subject to enrollment numbers



# Academics in our *High School* continued

Our Graduating Electives Programme (GEP), is built around three components; the BTEC Level 3 Business, two IBDP Courses and the GEP Core. Through this programme, students will have the opportunity via a number of electives to construct a personalized and rigorous academic portfolio that differentiates them when applying to university. Below you will see an outline followed by a summary of each of the three elements of our GEP.

Graduating Electives Programme (GEP) – Year 12 and Year 13						
GEP Core (Choose 1)	Group 1 (Mandatory)	Group 2 (Mandatory)	Group 3 (Mandatory)	Group 4 (Choose 1)	Group 5 (Mandatory)	Group 6 (Choose 1)
IBDP Core (EE, CAS & ToK)	BTEC Business	BTEC Business	BTEC Business	Environmental systems and societies (SL)	BTEC Business	Visual Arts (SL)
				Chemistry (SL)		Film (SL)
				Physics (SL)		Music (SL)
				Design Technology (SL)		Theatre (SL)
* <i>High School English</i>  or  * <i>High School Maths</i>				Sports, exercise and health science (SL)		Computer Science (SL)
						Biology (SL)
						Chemistry <u>OR</u> Physics (SL) <i>(One option depending on numbers)</i>
						Economics (SL/HL)

All courses subject to enrollment numbers

\* *Mandatory in some cases for students when applying to universities. Please discuss with the High School team*

# Academics in our *High School* continued

## BTEC Level 3 Business

Our BTEC qualification that is externally accredited Pearson Edexcel in the UK. This qualification is recognized by universities all over the world and our students have an excellent track record of success and of gaining entry to their university of choice via this pathway. The BTEC is an established qualification preparing students to make a difference in employment. BTEC qualifications offer practical experience that is often lacking in more traditional educational routes. Students undertake a number of units for which they present evidence, based on real-life work and studies. This allows them to demonstrate their skills and knowledge in practical situations. For further information on our BTEC Level 3 Business Programme, please contact our BTEC Coordinator.

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Two courses from the International Baccalaureate Diploma Programme (IBDP)

GEP students have the opportunity to complete at least two IBDP courses in any of that programme's subject groups. IBDP courses provide and enhance the theoretical underpinnings and academic rigour of our GEP. Students can choose one course from Group 4 (Sciences) and Group 6 (The Arts), as outlined above.

## GEP Core

As part of the GEP, students will have the option to complete a core programme. The purpose of this is to broaden students' educational experience and challenge them to apply their knowledge and skills. Students may gain additional qualifications through specific options in the core programme (please discuss with the GEP Coordinator for further information). They can choose to complete elements from the following pathways:

The International Baccalaureate Diploma Programme (IBDP) Core – Extended Essay (EE), Theory of Knowledge (ToK) and Creativity, Activity, Service (CAS) – See above for further information

# Academics in our *High School* continued

High School Mathematics or High School English – for some students they will require this as a part of the application process to some universities. If you have any questions regarding this, please contact the High School team

Upon the full completion of either the International Baccalaureate Diploma Programme (IBDP) or our Graduating Electives Programme (GEP), students will be eligible for our BIS Houston High School Diploma. If you are intending to apply to a US university we will support you in constructing an academic portfolio that demonstrates compliance with the four by four requirements (four years of study of mathematics, English, science and a humanities subject). Should students have any additional requirements for entry to their next destination, the High School team will discuss how we can support with this.

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