

An Essential Guide to IGCSE

What is the IGCSE programme?

The 'International General Certificate of Secondary Education' (IGCSE) is a globally-recognised academic qualification/curriculum consisting of core and optional subjects. The IGCSE curriculum is offered to students typically aged between 14 and 16. At the end of the two-year programme, students are externally assessed through examinations for each subject taken.

Why do students choose the IGCSE programme?

The IGCSE is the only examination series that is fully moderated by external examiners and externally accredited for each individual subject. This means that it is entirely reliable and arguably the most academically rigorous course available internationally. This external independence ensures that the achievements of students are easily recognised and benchmarked by every college, university and major employer around the world, giving IGCSE a huge advantage as the gold standard of qualifications for international students of this age group.

"The curriculum is a superb preparation for university; it gives students the ability to analyze, the ability to synthesize and the ability to communicate."

Duke University, USA

What subjects do students study?

Students are required to study six core IGCSE subjects: Mathematics, English Language, English Literature (or English as an Additional Language), Coordinated (Double) Science (a mixture of Physics, Chemistry and Biology) and Global Perspectives.

Remaining subjects are divided into 4 options blocks, depending on student demand for subjects each year. Students are required to choose an option from each block that they enjoy, feel confident of doing well in and may add to their overall study plan. All IGCSEs are graded on a scale from A*/9 (highest grade) down to G/1. Further details about IGCSE subjects can be found in our 'IGCSE Options Guide'.

How does IGCSE compare to other programmes such as the IB Middle Years Programme?

Like other modern programmes, the IGCSE offers a very balanced and comprehensive curriculum and a flexible course of study, which encourages high academic standards through a practical approach to teaching and learning. Students of all ability levels have the freedom to choose options that are right for them and, thereby, the opportunity to obtain good grades. While the syllabi and curricula of both IB MYP and IGCSE have an international outlook, the IGCSE is tailored for students to gain a wide breadth of knowledge, whilst also allowing students to customise their education to suit their talents, needs and abilities.

Can a student enter the IGCSE programme after completing his/her earlier schooling using a different system or curriculum?

The IGCSE is a two-year programme starting in Year 10. A student who has done his/ her early schooling from any other system or curriculum can easily apply for the IGCSE programme. Each application will be assessed, taking into account previous school reports, pre-entry assessment results plus any other qualifications/talents the student may have.

What recognition does the IGCSE provide students with?

The IGCSE programme at The British School of Guangzhou provides the perfect foundation upon which students can progress to study A-Levels. In addition, due to the wide range of subjects students study at IGCSE level, these qualifications also provide an excellent basis for students to undertake any other international pre-university programme such as the IB Diploma or Advanced Placement Diploma.

How have our students recently performed in IGCSE examinations?

The two main criteria that are used to judge examination performance for 16 year olds in the UK are; achieving 5 grades at 'C' or above, and the number of the highest grades achieved. We are very proud that **97% of all examinations sat by the British School of Guangzhou students received grade 'C' or above.**

This is a tremendous achievement, but our top students really shone with **58% of exams taken awarded either grade 'A*' or 'A'** - the highest possible grades. This is compared to the UK's average of 20%, showing just how far ahead our students are as they move to university entry.

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