

A Levels and IB Diploma: Overview

Students start their preparation for university in the final two years of school. For students aged 16 to 18, **A Levels** and the **IB Diploma** are the two most popular routes. Both qualifications are equally accepted by universities, but there are certain differences in the

- 🔗 **Academic course structure**
- 🔗 **Learning process (assessments)**
- 🔗 **Additional requirements**

In the traditional British system, students study for A Levels in Years 12 and 13 (known as 'Sixth Form'). Introduced in 1951, **A Levels** are the official qualification in England, Wales and Northern Ireland. They are the culmination of the English National Curriculum for students aged 2 to 18. Learners gain two qualifications (AS and A Levels) over the course of two years.

The **IB Diploma** or the International Baccalaureate Diploma Programme follows on from IB Primary and Middle Years Programme, privately owned by the International Baccalaureate Organisation. Developed in 1960 by international educators in Switzerland, the IB is based on English, US and Canadian Curricula.

A Levels

- ▶ Examined in English and Welsh.
- ▶ Complete flexibility.
- ▶ Assessed through examinations and coursework.
- ▶ Voluntary non-academic programme.
- ▶ Each subject is a qualification.



A Level students focus on a fewer subjects (3-4) but in greater depth, which relate to the course they may wish to study at university.

3-4
subjects

Students can choose from over 50 subjects depending on their school's provision. For example, ISM currently offers 20 A Level subjects.

Alongside their academic studies students are encouraged to complete **supplementary** courses and activities such as

- The Extended Project
- Work Experience
- Volunteer projects

- ▶ A Level subjects are all examined separately.
- ▶ Each subject receives its own grade from A* to E.
- ▶ Each subject is recognised as a separate qualification.

A-E
grades

Students get assessed via examinations at the end of each academic year.

A Level examinations are managed by various government-approved examination boards in the United Kingdom.



IB

- ▶ Examined in English, French and Spanish.
- ▶ Subjects are the components of the Diploma.
- ▶ Assessed via examinations and internal components.
- ▶ Compulsory additional requirements.
- ▶ One certificate for all subjects.



IB Students study **six groups** of subjects including:

- Studies in Language and Literature
- Language Acquisition
- Individuals and Societies
- Experimental Sciences
- Mathematics
- The Arts

6
subjects

There are also additional **compulsory elements**: TOK (Theory of Knowledge); CAS (Creativity, Activity, Service) and Extended Essay.

- ▶ IB subject grades count towards an overall score.
- ▶ Each subject is marked on a scale between 1 and 7
- ▶ There is a required minimum of 24 and a maximum total of 45 for the whole set of subjects.

45
top score

Public IB examinations take place at the end of the final academic year.

IB examinations are managed by the International Baccalaureate Organisation.





Both A Levels and IB are equally accepted by universities around the world.

When choosing a system each family should weigh all pros and cons considering the students' individual preferences and learning style.

A Levels summary:

A Levels allow students to *specialise early* and prepare for a chosen university path.

This is especially useful to students who have a clear plan for their future studies. For example, students looking to study the sciences or engineering at university can focus by taking Maths, Physics, Chemistry and Biology.

Equally, students who have not decided on their university course can study a broader curriculum. For example they can study Maths, Humanities, a Language and a Science, keeping their options open.

A Level qualifications will suit a student who has the mind set on a future career and prefers to follow a more defined syllabus with more direct teaching.



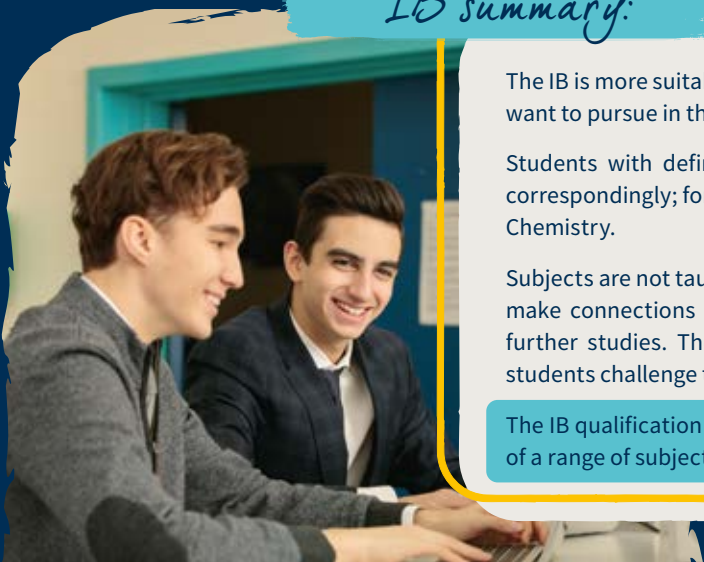
IB summary:

The IB is more suitable for students who are not sure about the career path they want to pursue in the future or want to keep a *broader curriculum*.

Students with definite career paths can choose their Higher Level subjects correspondingly; for example, a potential engineer may take Maths, Physics and Chemistry.

Subjects are not taught in isolation and the programme encourages students to make connections between subjects and gain the skills they might need for further studies. The additional requirements of TOK and CAS mean that all students challenge themselves personally as well as academically.

The IB qualification will suit a student who wishes to develop an understanding of a range of subjects with an multi-disciplinary approach.



A Levels and the IB represent two different ways for students to achieve the same goal of attending top world universities.



THE INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL
OF MOSCOW
A NORD ANGLIA EDUCATION SCHOOL

Get in Touch with us!

+7 (495) 922 44 00
www.internationalschool.ru
admissions@internationalschool.ru