



King's College
Saint Michaels

GCSES AND IGCSES OPTIONS

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GCSES AND IGCSE OPTIONS GUIDE

Introduction

King's College Saint Michaels is dedicated to helping pupils achieve the combination of skills and qualifications which are essential for young adults to enter our Sixth Form, move on to higher education and to thrive in the world beyond.

In Year 10 and Year 11, we provide the opportunity for pupils to study a broad range of academic subjects leading to the internationally respected GCSE/IGCSE qualifications.

Pupils entering Year 10 will embark on a programme of study lasting two years with public examinations at the end of Year 11.

All pupils will study English and Mathematics IGCSEs. They will also choose up to five further subjects in which they will sit GCSE/IGCSE examinations. In addition, all pupils receive tuition in PSHE and take part in Sports activities. These subjects will not lead to a GCSE/IGCSE qualification.

The tables on the next page show the choices available.

There have been many changes to the British education system in the last three years. The most radical is that AS Levels will no longer count towards a final A Level grade. This means that universities will increasingly be looking at the GCSE/IGCSE profile of applicants. Pupils must, therefore, ensure that they select optional subjects which reflect their true interest and abilities rather than the perceived "importance" of a subject so that they show they have a wide range of skills and give themselves the very best chance of achieving the best possible grades and developing their potential. At Saint Michaels we encourage students to choose options for IGCSE that they will continue for A level.

Consequently, there tends to be two main strands: Science and Humanities. We wish students to look ahead so that their choices at this stage match the appropriate pathway for their future ambitions. So we encourage students to discuss their plans with us before making confirmed choices for GCSE.

Compulsory Subjects at GCSE/ICGSE

All pupils must study the subjects below.

IGCSE Subjects	Non-examined subjects
English	Physical Education/ Sport
Mathematics	PSHE

Option Subjects at GCSE/ICGSE

Pupils select one subject from each column.

A	B	C	D	E
Biology	Chemistry	Physics	Spanish	Art & Design
Economics	Business Studies	Geography	Environmental Management	Computer Science

English Language Support

We understand that many of our students are studying GCSEs in a second language. The subject specific vocabulary required for study at this level can be daunting, even for those who have a high level of English proficiency. That is why we offer targeted language support. Throughout the week there are English lessons which focus on the needs of GCSE study and the key vocabulary needed. Additional one to one support can be offered to support students in understanding how to structure an exam essay or how to respond to GCSE exam paper questions with more clarity. Our well qualified and experienced English teachers also support in classrooms helping GCSE students alongside the subject teachers. We believe this partnership between the English teachers and GCSE specialist staff really makes a difference to the success of our students.

English learning support aims to develop students' skills in the five areas of the English Language, namely:

Writing:

- Formal and Informal letters
- Reports
- Summaries
- Stories
- Articles
- Academic Style Essays

Speaking:

- Be able to provide information about themselves
- Make and respond to suggestions, discuss alternatives, make recommendations and negotiate agreement
- Describe photographs and other images
- Talk about opinions, likes/dislikes, habits and experiences
- Present chosen information in a seminar setting
- Hold and defend a position during debate

Listening:

- Listen to lectures/texts to find key information
- Listen to find specific information and detailed meaning
- Listen for attitude and opinion

Reading:

- Read notices and other short texts to find specific information
- Skim read texts to gain a general understanding of the content
- Scan read texts to find specific information.
- Complete closed exercise using information derived from a text
- Read text in detail for full understanding of the information present within the text
- Understand vocabulary and grammar present in written text

Pronunciation:

Pronunciation is recognized as an often overlooked but key facet of development in the English language and will be an area of focus throughout the course, with an appropriate amount of time dedicated to it over the course of the academic year.

For those students who require additional help the team run additional English support lessons. These take the form of small group classes and are structured in such a way as to allow a focus on the needs of the group or individual, whether this is conversational support, exam support or specific subject support.

At the end of the course students have the opportunity to sit an external qualification, either from the Cambridge suite of exams or the IGCSE English Language or English as a Second Language exam.

In line with the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR) guidelines we would expect each student, after a year of study, to increase their level by one tier. Therefore, a student beginning the course at a B2 level should expect to have reached level C1 by the end of the first year of study.

Why GCSEs/IGCSEs matter

GCSEs mark the end of an important stage in secondary education – the move from studying a broad range of subjects to increased specialisation. The challenges of the GCSE courses allow pupils to discover where their real academic strengths lie. They reveal the areas in which pupils are likely to excel in the future and give a clear indication of the subject areas which pupils ought to pursue as they head for A Levels, university and the professional world.

These public examinations are recognised internationally and the grades at the end of Year 11 not only celebrate achievement in pre-16 education but are also the qualifications which give pupils access to further study. They are used to determine whether a pupil has developed sufficient skills to be able to access A Level courses at King's College. With recent changes in the British education system, GCSE grades have taken on even more importance, as they will be one of the principal sources of evidence of ability that universities use for their admissions process.

GCSE courses provide pupils with the opportunity to expand their knowledge and the final examinations in Year 11 provide evidence of the level of competence reached. More importantly, however, they enable young people to develop as learners, nurturing the skills they will require for the rest of their life. Every subject helps to pupils to develop one or more of these key skills- literacy, essay writing, organisation of ideas, analytical thinking, evaluation and numeracy.

At King's College Saint Michaels we support our learners as they grow in maturity and learn to face the challenges of preparing for the first set of examinations which will have a lasting impact on their future life chances. From the very beginning, the selection of option subjects, right through to the end of the last examination in Year 11, we believe that pupils can develop their potential, we encourage them to make the most every learning opportunity. To this end we stress the importance of their attitude to learning and organisation to enable them to perform to the very best of their ability. Subject choices should be made carefully, following thought and consultation.

Pupils are free to choose the subjects they wish, supported by their parents. Some subjects do have entry requirements, however. Please look out for these in the subject pages.

Facilitating Subjects

Some highly-selective universities have a preference for the A Levels needed for study of certain courses. Subjects that will need to be studied in order to be able study that subject or related subjects at university are what they call "Facilitating Subjects". Having a GCSE/IGCSE in these subjects will allow you to continue to study them at A Level. Take this into consideration when choosing options.

These subjects include:

- Biology
- Chemistry
- Geography
- Mathematics and Further Mathematics
- Physics

Other GCSE/IGCSE subjects may not be compulsory for study of that subject at a higher level but it will give an insight and a head start at A level or higher. Take this into consideration when choosing options.

These subjects include:

- Art
- Business Studies
- Economics

Examination Boards and Grading Systems

COMPULSORY SUBJECTS AT GCSE/IGCSE

GCSE/IGCSE Subject	Qualification	Grading System
English	Edexcel IGCSE	9-1
Mathematics	Edexcel IGCSE	9-1

OPTION SUBJECTS AT GCSE/IGCSE

Subject	Qualification	Grading System
Art and Design	AQA	IGCSE 9-1
Biology	Edexcel	IGCSE 9-1
Business Studies	Edexcel	IGCSE 9-1
Chemistry	Edexcel	IGCSE 9-1
Computer Science	CIE	IGCSE A*-G
Economics	CIE	IGCSE A*-G
Environmental Management	CIE	IGCSE A*-G
Geography	Edexcel	IGCSE 9-1
Physics	Edexcel	IGCSE 9-1
Spanish	Edexcel	IGCSE 9-1

GRADING SYSTEM

The grades of UK GCSE and IGCSE qualifications are changing from a grade scale of A* to G to a scale of 9 to 1. 9 is the highest level and 1 is the lowest pass grade. By 2020, most subjects will be awarded on the 9-1 scale however some International GCSE will continue to use the A* to G system.

	Level 2 Pass				Level 1 Pass				
(I)GCSE Grade	A*	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	U

	Level 2 Pass						Level 1 Pass			
(I)GCSE Grade	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	U

Course Content: Compulsory Subjects

ENGLISH - EDEXCEL IGCSE (4ES1)

The aims and objectives of this qualification are to enable students to:

- read a wide range of texts fluently and with good understanding
- read critically and use knowledge gained from wide reading to inform and improve their own writing
- write effectively and coherently using Standard English appropriately
- use grammar correctly, punctuate and spell accurately
- acquire and apply a wide vocabulary alongside knowledge and understanding of grammatical terminology, and linguistic conventions for reading, writing and spoken language

MATHEMATICS - EDEXCEL IGCSE (4MA1)

The Pearson Edexcel International GCSE in Mathematics (Specification A) qualification enables students to:

- develop their knowledge and understanding of mathematical concepts and techniques
- acquire a foundation of mathematical skills for further study in the subject or related areas
- enjoy using and applying mathematical techniques and concepts, and become confident in using mathematics to solve problems
- appreciate the importance of mathematics in society, employment and study.

Course Content: Option Subjects

BIOLOGY - EDEXCEL INTERNATIONAL GCSE (4BI1)

The aims and objectives of this qualification are to enable students to:

- learn about unifying patterns and themes in biology and use them in new and changing situations
- acquire knowledge and understanding of biological facts, terminology, concepts, principles and practical techniques
- apply the principles and concepts of biology, including those related to the applications of biology, to different contexts
- evaluate biological information, making judgements on the basis of this information
- appreciate the practical nature of biology, developing experimental and investigative skills based on correct and safe laboratory techniques
- analyse, interpret and evaluate data and experimental methods, drawing conclusions that are consistent with evidence from experimental activities and suggesting possible improvements and further investigations
- recognise the importance of accurate experimental work and reporting scientific methods in biology
- select, organise and present relevant information clearly and logically using appropriate vocabulary, definitions and conventions
- develop a logical approach to problem solving in a wider context
- select and apply appropriate areas of mathematics relevant to biology as set out under each topic
- prepare for more advanced courses in biology and for other courses that require knowledge of biology.

Entry Requirements: Pupils should have studied Sciences including Biology to at least year 9 standard.

CHEMISTRY - EDEXCEL INTERNATIONAL GCSE (4CH1)

The aims and objectives of this qualification are to enable students to:

- learn about unifying patterns and themes in chemistry and use them in new and changing situations
- acquire knowledge and understanding of chemical facts, terminology, concepts, principles and practical techniques
- apply the principles and concepts of chemistry, including those related to the applications of chemistry, to different contexts
- evaluate chemical information, making judgements on the basis of this information

- appreciate the practical nature of chemistry, developing experimental and investigative skills based on correct and safe laboratory techniques
- analyse, interpret and evaluate data and experimental methods, drawing conclusions that are consistent with evidence from experimental activities and suggesting possible improvements and further investigations
- recognise the importance of accurate experimental work and reporting scientific methods in chemistry
- select, organise and present relevant information clearly and logically using appropriate vocabulary, definitions and conventions
- develop a logical approach to problem solving in a wider context.
- select and apply appropriate areas of mathematics relevant to chemistry as set out under each topic
- prepare for more advanced courses in chemistry and for other courses that require knowledge of chemistry

Entry Requirements: Pupils should have studied Sciences including Chemistry to at least year 9 standard.

PHYSICS - EDEXCEL INTERNATIONAL GCSE (4PH1)

The Edexcel International GCSE in Physics qualification enables students to:

- learn about unifying patterns and themes in physics and use them in new and changing situations
- acquire knowledge and understanding of physical facts, terminology, concepts, principles and practical techniques
- apply the principles and concepts of physics, including those related to the applications of physics, to different contexts
- evaluate physical information, making judgements on the basis of this information
- appreciate the practical nature of physics, developing experimental and investigative skills based on correct and safe laboratory techniques
- analyse, interpret and evaluate data and experimental methods, drawing conclusions that are consistent with evidence from experimental activities and suggesting possible improvements and further investigations
- recognise the importance of accurate experimental work and reporting scientific methods in physics
- select, organise and present relevant information clearly and logically using appropriate vocabulary, definitions and conventions
- develop a logical approach to problem solving in a wider context

- select and apply appropriate areas of mathematics relevant to physics as set out under each topic
- prepare for more advanced courses in physics and for other courses that require knowledge of physics.

Entry Requirements: Pupils should have studied Sciences including Physics to at least year 9 standard.

BUSINESS STUDIES - EDEXCEL INTERNATIONAL GCSE (4BI1)

The aims and objectives of this qualification are to enable students to:

- develop an interest in and enthusiasm for the study of business
- develop an understanding of business concepts, business terminology, business objectives and the integrated nature of business activity
- understand how the main types of business are organised, financed and operated
- develop and apply knowledge, understanding and skills to contemporary business issues in a wide range of businesses from small enterprises to large multinationals and businesses operating in local, national and global context
- develop critical-thinking and enquiry skills to distinguish between facts and opinion, calculating, interpreting and evaluating business data, to help build arguments and make informed judgements
- develop an understanding of the dynamics of business activity and the related considerations of ethics and sustainability for global businesses.

Entry Requirements: Students are not expected to have studied Business Studies previously but should show enthusiasm for the course and be confident in use of English.

ECONOMICS – CIE INTERNATIONAL GCSE (0455)

The aims of the CIE International GCSE in Economics qualification is to enable students to :

- know and understand economic terminology, concepts and theories
- use basic economic numeracy and interpret economic data
- use the tools of economic analysis
- express economic ideas logically and clearly in a written form
- develop an understanding of economic concepts and apply these concepts to real-life situations
- calculate, interpret and evaluate economic data in order to make reasoned arguments and informed judgements

- develop an awareness of economic change and its impact on developing and developed economies
- understand economic issues, problems and possible solutions that affect mixed economies
- participate effectively in society as citizens, producers and consumers.

Entry Requirements: Pupils should show enthusiasm for the course and be confident in mathematics.

GEOGRAPHY -EDEXCEL INTERNATIONAL GCSE (4GE1)

The aims and objectives of the Edexcel IGCSE in Geography are to enable students to:

- apply and build on the fundamental building blocks of geographical knowledge
- actively engage in the process of geographical enquiry to develop as effective and independent learners, and as critical and reflective thinkers with enquiring minds
- develop their knowledge and understanding of geographical concepts and appreciate the relevance of these concepts to our changing world
- develop a framework of spatial awareness in which to appreciate the importance of the location of places and environments at a range of scales
- appreciate that people have different views of, and attitudes to, the world, its environments and its issues
- acquire, develop and apply practical geographical enquiry skills
- undertake geographical investigations that include both primary and secondary data collection, presentation and analysis, drawing conclusions, and evaluating the whole geographical investigation
- develop and apply their learning to the real world through fieldwork
- develop their awareness of global issues and recognise the challenges of moving towards a sustainable future.

Entry Requirements: Students are not expected to have studied Geography previously but should show enthusiasm for the course and be confident in use of English.

ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT - CIE INTERNATIONAL GCSE (0680)

The CIE International GCSE in Environmental Management qualification enables students to acquire:

- knowledge of natural systems which make life possible on Earth
- an understanding that humans are part of these systems and depend on them
- an appreciation of the diverse influences of human activity on natural systems
- an awareness of the need to manage natural systems

- an understanding of sustainable development to meet the needs of the present, without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs
- a sense of responsibility and concern for the welfare of the environment and all organisms
- an awareness of their own values concerning environmental issues
- an awareness of the values of others
- a willingness to review their own attitudes in the light of new knowledge and experiences
- a sound basis for further study, personal development and participation in local and global environmental concerns.

Entry Requirements: Students are not expected to have studied Environmental Management Studies previously but should show enthusiasm for the course and be confident in use of English.

SPANISH - EDEXCEL INTERNATIONAL GCSE (4SP1)

The aims and objectives of this qualification are to enable students to:

- develop their ability to communicate confidently and coherently with native speakers in speech and writing, conveying what they want to say with increasing accuracy
- express and develop thoughts and ideas spontaneously and fluently
- listen to and understand clearly articulated, standard speech at near normal speed deepen their knowledge about how language works and enrich their vocabulary in order for them to increase their independent use and understanding of extended language in a wide range of contexts
- acquire new knowledge, skills and ways of thinking through the ability to understand and respond to a rich range of authentic spoken and written material, adapted and abridged, as appropriate, including literary texts
- develop awareness and understanding of the culture and identity of the countries and communities where the language is spoken
- be encouraged to make appropriate links to other areas of the curriculum to enable bilingual and deeper learning, where the language may become a medium for constructing and applying knowledge
- develop language-learning skills both for immediate use and to prepare them for further language study and use in school, higher education or employment
- develop language strategies, including repair strategies.

Entry Requirements: Pupils need not have studied Spanish before but some knowledge of the language would be an advantage.

ART & DESIGN - EDEXCEL GCSE (1AD0)

The course will help to develop:

- creative, imaginative and practical skills for communicating and expressing ideas, feelings and meanings in art, craft and design
- investigative, analytical, experimental and interpretive capabilities, aesthetic understanding and critical skills
- understanding of the codes and conventions of art, craft and design, and an awareness of the contexts in which they operate
- knowledge and understanding of art, craft and design in contemporary society and in other times and cultures.

Entry Requirements: Art is a challenging subject which requires pupils to be able to display artistic talent and promise. To ensure success, pupils should be aware that a significant time commitment is required beyond lessons. The Head of Art will be able to provide further details and assess suitability for the course.

COMPUTER SCIENCE - CIE INTERNATIONAL GCSE 0478

Learners following the Cambridge IGCSE Computer Science syllabus develop their understanding of the main principles of problem solving using computers. They can apply their understanding to develop computer-based solutions to problems using algorithms and a high-level programming language. Learners also develop a range of technical skills, as well as being able to effectively test and evaluate computing solutions. Studying Cambridge IGCSE Computer Science will help learners appreciate current and emerging computing technologies, the benefits of their use and recognise their potential risks.

Cambridge IGCSE Computer Science helps learners develop an interest in computing and gain confidence in computational thinking. It is an ideal foundation for further study and the skills learnt can also be used in other areas of study and in everyday life.

Entry Requirements: Computer Science is a challenging subject which requires excellent analytical thinking and a high level of mathematical ability.

Useful Websites

AQA

<http://www.aqa.org.uk/qualifications>

Edexcel GCSE

<http://qualifications.pearson.com/en/qualifications/edexcel-gcses.html>

Edexcel IGCSE

<http://qualifications.pearson.com/en/qualifications/edexcel-international-gcses-and-edexcel-certificates/about-international-gcses.html>

CIE IGCSE

<http://www.cie.org.uk/programmes-and-qualifications/cambridge-secondary-2/cambridge-igcse/subjects/>

General Advice

<http://www.plotr.co.uk/advice/articles/choosing-gcse-options-19-questions-to-ask-yourself/>

Grade Descriptors from gov.uk

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/grade-descriptors-for-gcses-graded-9-to-1>

Looking Ahead

A Level subjects needed for degree courses

<http://university.which.co.uk/advice/a-level-choices/what-a-levels-do-you-need-for-the-degree-you-want-to-study>

Information on Facilitating Subjects

<http://russellgroup.ac.uk/for-students/school-and-college-in-the-uk/subject-choices-at-school-and-college/>