



CAMPION SCHOOL
Athens

Year 9

IGCSE Choices

2022

A Guide for Parents and Pupils

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This booklet is intended to give some general guidance on the option choices for the IGCSE courses next year. It is important to be fully informed before making your final decision about what courses to follow, therefore you are advised to take every opportunity to talk with your form tutors, the Year 9 Tutor, Mrs Bodington , Year 10/ 11 Tutor Mr Nitsche and Ms Siani who is the UK universities advisor. It is also vital that pupils speak with their parents and discuss the range of options available.

It is extremely important that pupils talk with subject teachers about their subject and the demands of that examination. Think about what you like and enjoy studying, but combine that with an understanding of what you need to follow a career you might be interested in.

What are IGCSEs?

IGCSE stands for the International General Certificate of Secondary Education. They are exams run by Cambridge International Exams and recognised by British, American and European universities. The course is delivered over 2 years, culminating in final exams. There is an element of “controlled conditioned” coursework in some subjects.

You may have read in the English press, articles relating to “Changes to GCSEs”. Due to the fact that pupils at Campion take IGCSEs, these changes do not affect us.

A. General Advice

There are many factors to take into account when considering your IGCSE choices. It can help to do a quick overview of **factors that you should and should not take** into account before making your final decision:

Factors that **should NOT** influence your decision:

- Don't be influenced by what subjects your friends choose.
- Do not let your personal likes/dislikes of teachers affect your choice of subject.

Factors that **SHOULD** influence your decision:

- Talk with your subject teachers, the Year 9 Year Tutor, the UCAS Advisor, present IGCSE pupils.
- Talk to your parents – discuss your choices and your possible career aspirations.
- Read the IGCSE syllabus of the subject you are interested in. Your teachers will be able to show you the syllabus and examples of past papers.
- Consult the Cambridge International Exams website. This has a student/parent portal and gives information about the subjects available and the structure of the exams.
- Try to achieve a sensible mix of IGCSE subjects.

Don't forget: UNIFROG

The Unifrog online careers advice programme is a good resource to help you with ideas about future careers and what subjects at IGCSE and IB you will need to take. Every Year 9 pupil has a username and password which they can use to access the Unifrog website.

Summary:

In order to arrive at the right choice of IGCSE subjects you must balance three important factors:

- Your academic strengths and weaknesses.
- Your personal abilities and aptitudes.
- The implications of your choices on your possible IB choices, degree and career choices.

B. IGCSE Choices and entry to university

Balancing your choices

Universities are looking for specific IGCSE and IB Higher Level subjects and in a few cases there are also certain requirements in English and Maths. Champion Students are required to study English Language and English Literature and the higher of the two grades is usually accepted as the “English grade”.

However, universities are also interested in pupils who offer a strong mix of subjects at IGCSE and IB. Universities like **a broad spread of IGCSE subjects**, therefore, pupils should aim to offer Maths, English, a humanities subject, at least one foreign language and at least one science subject (if you wish to study the sciences and Medicine/Dentistry/Veterinary Science it is necessary to take all 3 sciences at IGCSE – Physics, Chemistry, Biology).

How many IGCSEs are needed to apply to university?

Be Aware: To be admitted onto the IB programme at Champion School, pupils, will normally be required to have achieved **at least five passes at IGCSE (grade C or higher)** including Mathematics and English Language. When this has not been achieved, progression into Year 12, and the programme that the pupil might then follow, will be subject to formal agreement by the school following individual consultation with pupil and parents.

Most universities also require pupils to have a minimum of **5 IGCSE passes** including Maths and English Language. Passes have to be a grade C or above. However, for certain subjects such as Psychology, Engineering, and Medicine there are specific IGCSE grades required.

Humanities at IGCSE

It is recommended that pupils have **at least one** humanities subject (Classical Civilisations, Geography, and History) at IGCSE. These are highly regarded by the universities as academic subjects and are considered important to the teaching of analytical and critical thinking skills.

If you wish to study Geography or History at IB level it is highly recommended that you choose these subjects at IGCSE level.

Sciences at IGCSE

Science degrees are becoming increasingly popular again in the current economic climate. If you are interested in studying a science subject at university you will need to have good IGCSE grades in Maths and the sciences and to take at least two sciences at IB Higher Level.

Be aware that universities normally expect **at least a grade B at IGCSE in Maths and the science subjects**. Oxford, Cambridge and the top ranking universities will require a minimum of a grade A, and preferably an A*.

Pupils who do not take sciences at Higher Level but then later decide they want to study sciences at university can apply to Foundation Courses at university (for 1 year) before applying for a science degree. **However, the universities still expect you to have Maths and two sciences at IGCSE.**

A quick overview of science subject combinations:

University Subject	Essential IGCSE Subjects
Biology, Zoology, Botany	Chemistry, Biology
Engineering	Physics, Maths (extended), Chemistry
Physics	Physics, Maths (extended)
Medicine/Dentistry	Chemistry, Biology, Maths (extended), Physics
Veterinary Science	Maths (extended), Chemistry, Biology

Engineering

It is now quite usual for **potential engineers** to take a **foreign language at IGCSE as well as Maths and Physics**. Many engineering degree courses offer a year abroad as an industrial placement – known as ‘sandwich’ degrees. **A foreign language at IGCSE** as well as at IB level will appeal to universities offering these ‘sandwich’ degree courses. French and German are the usual languages offered as part of the modules on engineering degree courses and Spanish, Arabic, Mandarin are also useful.

For the **Natural Sciences**, for example, **Biology and Biomedical Sciences** pupils should take Biology and Chemistry at IGCSE.

For **Mechanical Engineering and Civil Engineering** pupils will need to have Maths and Physics at IGCSE.

For **Chemical Engineering** Chemistry, Maths and Physics are a good combination.

For Medicine the medical schools expect a very strong IGCSE record as well as excellent IB grades. Therefore, most medical schools recommend that pupils should have **at least 6 A grades at IGCSE**. Some require a minimum number of 5 A* at IGCSE. Pupils applying for Medicine and Dentistry must be aware that successful applicants to Medicine usually have at least 10 IGCSEs, while 36 points is the minimum offer at IB and that most pupils average 38 to 40 points. Pupils applying for Medicine will also have to sit an aptitude test (UKCAT or BMAT) at the end of Year 12 which is externally examined.

The Social Sciences

Entry to the Social Sciences at degree level is reasonably flexible. The Social Sciences are: Politics, Psychology, Sociology, Economics, Business Studies and Management. However, a strong performance at IGCSE is necessary especially in Maths and English. These courses tend to be competitive in the popular universities and high IB grades are required (34 to 36 points have been average offers in previous years).

University Subject	IGCSE Requirements	Recommended IB subjects
Pure Economics	Maths grade B or above	Maths HL
Management and Business Studies	Maths and English Language grade B or above	Maths at SL, some Management courses prefer Maths HL
Psychology BSc (science based course)	Maths , Biology, grade B or above	Psychology HL, Biology HL, Maths SL
Politics	Maths and English Language grade C or above, History, Classical Civilisations	History HL or SL
Law	Maths and English Language grade B or above, History, Geography, or Classical Civilisations	English Literature, History, Economics, Foreign Languages HL

Psychology

Pupils interested in Psychology at IB and degree level are advised to take **Biology and Chemistry at IGCSE and to achieve at least a grade B in Maths (extended)**.

Economics

Pupils wishing to study Economics or Business/Finance at degree level must be able to show evidence of strong maths skills. **Maths IGCSE at grade B or above is recommended.**

Law

If you are interested in a career in the Law you will need to show evidence of strong analytical skills and evidence of good writing skills. **Pupils are advised to choose History or Classical Civilisations and to have both English Language and English Literature at IGCSE level.**

The Arts

Theatre/Drama/Music

Pupils interested in a career in the theatre are recommended to take Drama at IGCSE and preferably to have English Language and English Literature. Pupils must also participate actively in drama productions. Pupils interested in studying music must have studied IGCSE and IB music and have achieved a minimum of grade 5 ABRSM on an instrument and grade 8 ABRSM theory.

Art and Design

Any pupil wanting to follow a career in Art/Graphic Design/Interior Design must do Art and/or Design at IGCSE if they wish to study this at IB and degree level.

Architecture

Pupils considering architecture as a future career are advised to take IGCSE Art and/or Design as well as Physics, since some universities require this at IGCSE as well as a good grade in Maths (grade B or above).

C. Applications to Oxford and Cambridge

Applications to these universities are highly competitive. Most applicants to these universities have at least 10 IGCSEs at grade A, usually at least 6 at A*.

Pupils will also need to achieve outstanding IB points and require a minimum of 39 points with 40 to 42 being the average IB points offer.

Pupils will also need to have shown **evidence of excellence in extra-curricular activities** such as music exams, involvement in the forensics, debate and Model United Nations clubs, extra Maths exams and excellence in classical or modern foreign languages (e.g. Latin, ancient Greek, modern Greek, French, German, Spanish, and Italian).

Applicants to these two universities will also have to sit (and pass) special aptitude tests run by these universities.

D. Other Factors to Consider

The 'Russell Group' universities, which are considered some of the best in Britain, have published a document online called '**Informed Choices**' which gives an excellent overview of what IB and A level choices pupils should make according to the subject they wish to study. This can help pupils with their IGCSE choices. Your choice of IGCSE subjects will influence what subjects you can study at IB and undergraduate degree level.

The 'Russell Group' universities are: Birmingham, Bristol, Cambridge, Cardiff, Durham, Edinburgh, Exeter, Glasgow, Imperial, Kings College London, Leeds, Liverpool, LSE, Manchester, Newcastle, Nottingham, Oxford, Queen Mary London, Queens University Belfast, Sheffield, Southampton, UCL, Warwick and York.

These universities tend to look more favourably at certain subjects than others. These are referred to as "facilitating subjects". Choosing facilitating subjects therefore leaves open a wide range of courses to you for study at university.

Subjects that can be viewed as facilitating subjects: Maths; Physics; Biology; Chemistry; History; Geography; Modern and classical languages; English Literature.

<http://issuu.com/russellgroup/docs/informedchoices-latest/1?e=11344789/7212819>
<http://www.russellgroup.ac.uk/home/>

E. Degree choices and the job market

The current economic climate to an extent will influence IB and degree choices. Pupils must be aware of the need to acquire academic qualifications that will not only get them onto their degree choice, but also to meet the skills requirements of prospective employers.

Pupils need to acquire strong English language and maths skills. The ability to write clearly, concisely and to present a logical argument at length is considered a key asset, as are mathematical skills.

Employers are also looking for competence in foreign languages (French, Spanish, German, Chinese, Russian, and Arabic, for example) **and excellent computer skills.**

Universities and employers want to see evidence that a pupil can manage their time effectively not only to achieve academic excellence but also to acquire life skills and develop a well-rounded personality.

F. The Process

Stage 1 - Year 9 explore possible career options

Pupils work with Unifrog - a careers programme. Pupils will submit their initial subject choices (online). The subjects offered are provisional and dependent on uptake. The school reserves the right to direct candidates towards the subjects most suited to their individual aptitudes.

Stage 2 - Option Blocks and Individual Meetings

Depending on uptake of each subject, the school places subjects into 6 option blocks. Pupils will then receive an individual meeting with either [Mr Henderson](#), [Mr Nitsche](#) or [Mrs Bodington \(To be confirmed\)](#) to discuss the suitability of each course. At this point pupils have the possibility of changing subjects.

Stage 3 - Meeting for Parents

The purpose of this meeting is an explanation of the process and a brief introduction to the IB and the process of applying to university.

Stage 4 - Letter of confirmation

A letter will be issued stating what subjects your child has been issued with. If you are happy with the final offering, then please sign and return.

G. Useful Links

1. <http://www.russellgroup.ac.uk/home/>
2. <https://issuu.com/russellgroup/docs/informedchoices-latest>
3. <http://www.careerpilot.org.uk/>
4. <http://www.cie.org.uk/programmes-and-qualifications/cambridge-secondary-2/cambridge-igcse/>
5. <https://www.unifrog.org/>

(use your username and password to get onto the Unifrog page)