



CAMPION SCHOOL  
Athens

# IGCSE Options Process A Guide for Parents and Students

2023

## CONTENTS

	Page Number
General Advice	3
Subjects Available	4
IGCSE Choices and Entry to University	6
Degree choices and the Job Market	9
The Process	10
Useful Links	10

## Introduction

This booklet is intended to give some general guidance on the options process for the IGCSE courses which will begin next year as students start Year 10. It is important to be fully informed before making the final decision about which courses to follow, therefore you are advised to take every opportunity to talk with your form tutors, the Year 9 Tutor, Mrs Bodington, The Headmaster, Mr Henderson and Ms Siani who is our Universities Advisor. It is also extremely important that you talk to your 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 and some subjects also have coursework which is completed throughout Years 10 and 11.

## 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:

1. Think about your academic strengths and weaknesses.
2. Consider your personal abilities and aptitudes.
3. Think about the implications of your choices on your possible IB choices, degree and career choices.
4. Talk to your teachers.
5. Talk to your parents – discuss your choices and your possible career aspirations.
6. 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.
7. 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.
8. Try to select a balanced mix of IGCSE subjects.

## Subjects available

All students will take:

- Mathematics
- English - English Literature and English Language
- PE - either as a non-examined subject or as an iGCSE

Students should take a **science** subject:

- Physics
- Chemistry
- Biology

A **language** option:

- Modern Greek - Native Language, Second Language, Foreign Language
- French
- Spanish
- Arabic
- German

A **humanities** subject:

- Geography
- History
- Global Perspectives

They should then select **three other options**:

- Art
- Design
- Music
- Drama
- IT
- Up to two more science subjects
- A second language
- A second humanities subject

**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.

**Transcripts**

Many universities around the world are likely to ask for a transcript to support the student's application. A transcript is all report grades that have been issued over the past 3 or 4 years of study. Therefore, report grades issued in Year 10 will be vitally important to some students and their university applications.

## IGCSE Choices and Entry to University

### Balancing your choices

Universities like a broad spread of IGCSE subjects and most universities require applicants to have a minimum of 5 IGCSE passes including Maths and English Language. Passes are considered to be a grade C or above. All Champion students will study English Language and English Literature in their timetabled English lessons.

Some universities courses will require specific IGCSE and IB Higher Level subjects and in a few cases, there are also certain requirements in English and Maths. We encourage you to think about this when selecting your options for next year. Here is some guidance:

### Humanities

It is recommended that students have at least one humanities subject (Geography, History or Global Perspectives) at IGCSE. These are highly regarded by the universities as academic subjects and are considered important in the teaching of analytical and critical thinking skills. If you wish to study Geography or History at IB you should choose these subjects at IGCSE level.

### Sciences

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 (a B or above) in Maths and the sciences and to take at least two sciences at IB Higher Level. Oxford, Cambridge and the top ranking universities will require a minimum of a grade A, and preferably an A\*.

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
Natural Sciences (Biology and Biomedical Sciences)	Chemistry, Biology
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. French and German are the usual languages offered as part of the modules on engineering degree courses but could also include Spanish, Arabic, Mandarin.

### **Medicine**

The medical schools expect a very strong IGCSE record, as well as excellent IB grades. Therefore, most medical schools recommend that students should have at least 6 A grades at IGCSE. Some require a minimum number of 5 A\* at IGCSE. Students applying for Medicine and Dentistry must be aware that successful applicants usually have at least ten IGCSEs, while 36 points is the minimum offer at IB and that most average 38 to 40 points. Students 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 (Politics, Psychology, Sociology, Economics, Business Studies and Management)**

Entry to the Social Sciences at degree level is reasonably flexible. 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).

<b>University Subject</b>	<b>IGCSE Requirements</b>
Pure Economics	Maths grade B or above
Management and Business Studies	Maths and English Language grade B or above
Psychology BSc (science-based course)	Maths, Biology, grade B or above
Politics	Maths and English Language grade C or above, History
Psychology	Biology, Chemistry, Maths grade B or above
Law	Maths and English Language grade B or above, History, Geography

### **The Arts**

#### **Theatre and Drama**

Students interested in a career in the theatre are recommended to take Drama at IGCSE. They are also encouraged to participate actively in drama productions.

#### **Music**

Students interested in studying music at university must have studied IGCSE and IB music and have achieved a minimum of grade 8 ABRSM on an instrument and grade 5 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 and IB level.

## **Architecture**

Students 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).

## **Applications to Oxford and Cambridge**

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

## **Other factors to consider**

The Russell Group universities, which are considered some of the best in the UK, have published a document online called *Informed Choices* which gives an excellent overview of what IB and A level choices students should make according to the subject they wish to study. This can also help students with their IGCSE choices.

These universities tend to look more favourably at certain subjects than others. These are referred to as “facilitating subjects” and include Maths, Physics, Biology, Chemistry, History, Geography, Modern and classical languages and English Literature. Choosing facilitating subjects therefore leaves open a wide range of courses to you for study at university.

Further information can be found here:

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



### **Degree choices and the job market**

The current economic climate will influence IB and degree choices to an extent. Students 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. Students 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. 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.

## The Process

1. Parents attend a presentation to explain the process of choosing IGCSE subjects on offer at Campion alongside our Parent Teacher Meeting.
2. Students spend time researching their future university and career plans in PSHE lessons.
3. Students submit their completed options form by **Friday 31st March**.
4. The Option Blocks are then built. Where needed, students will then receive an individual meeting with either Mr Henderson, Mrs Soos or Mrs Bodington to discuss the suitability of each course. At this point students have the possibility of changing a subject.
5. A letter of confirmation will be issued confirming each students' options. If you and your parents are happy with the final offering, then please sign and return it to school.

## Useful Links

<http://www.cie.org.uk/cambridge-for/learners-and-parents/>

<http://www.russellgroup.ac.uk/home/>

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

<http://www.careerpilot.org.uk/>

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

[www.ucas.com](http://www.ucas.com)