

*ISF Courses for
the International
General Certificate
of Secondary
Education
(IGCSE)*

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About CIE

University of Cambridge International Examinations (CIE) is the world's largest provider of international qualifications for 14-19 year olds. CIE's broad range of qualifications is recognized by universities, education providers and employers across the globe.

What is Cambridge IGCSE?

The Cambridge International General Certificate of Secondary Education (IGCSE) is one of the most recognized qualifications around the world. IGCSE courses are renowned for developing vital educational skills, including recall of knowledge, oral skills, problem solving, initiative, team work and investigative skills. The resulting qualification provides a foundation for higher level courses, such as A and AS Levels, the Advanced International Certificate of Education, the North American Advanced Placement programme and the International Baccalaureate.

Cambridge IGCSE caters for different levels of ability with a choice between core and extended papers in many subjects. The core curriculum is based on an overview of the subject and is suitable for students expected to achieve grades C to G. The extended curriculum is more challenging and designed for students who are expected to achieve grades A* to C. Grades achieved through either route have the same value.

Cambridge IGCSE offers a flexible course of study that gives candidates the freedom to choose subjects that are right for them, whilst providing them with a broad knowledge base and lifelong skills.

Where is IGCSE accepted and recognized?

IGCSE is a high-profile qualification. It has exactly the same value in admitting students to institutes of further education and employment as the UK equivalent - GCSE.

IGCSE is comparable with GCE O Level and the UK GCSE.

IGCSE has an excellent reputation amongst international schools worldwide.

IGCSEs are recognized as a reliable record of attainment which counts towards entry to universities and colleges around the world.

A good grade (i.e. C or above) in IGCSE English as a Second Language is accepted for entry by almost all universities in the UK and many in the USA, Canada and Australia as evidence of adequate competence in the English language.

Who can take IGCSE?

Cambridge IGCSE is designed to be taught as a two year course for students aged 14 to 16 years. In some countries IGCSE courses last just one year and there are no formal age regulations.

In most subjects there is a choice between core and extended curricula, making IGCSE suitable for a wide range of abilities. Students can enter for the level that is most appropriate for them and this need not be the same across all subjects.

How is Cambridge IGCSE taught?

At school, students are encouraged to study a wide range of subjects at IGCSE level at the same time. In order to follow a broad and balanced curriculum, many students take courses from each of the IGCSE groups (see table of contents), particularly if they're aiming to go on to further education. This can lead to the award of the International Certificate of Education - an additional qualification that recognizes students who pass exams in seven or more subjects, including two languages and one subject from each of the other groups. However, it is also possible to study a free choice of IGCSE subjects.

The syllabus is set by Cambridge, but how it is taught will depend on the school or college.

The course differs for each subject, but there will be a mix of assessment methods throughout, including coursework, practical exercises, oral and listening tests, projects and written examinations.

Examination Information

IGCSE courses take two years to complete and exams are taken at the end of that period.

Examinations are held in June and November each year with results issued in August and February respectively.

Students must enter for Cambridge IGCSE through a registered CIE Centre.

ISF Courses for IGCSE Examinations

English

English - First Language

Designed for students for whom English is their mother tongue, IGCSE First Language English develops the ability to communicate clearly, accurately and effectively in both speech and writing. Students learn how to employ a wide-ranging vocabulary, use correct grammar, spelling and punctuation, and develop a personal style and an awareness of the audience being addressed. Students are also encouraged to read widely, both for their own enjoyment and to further their awareness of the ways in which English can be used. IGCSE First Language English also develops more general analysis and communication skills such as synthesis, inference, and the ability to order facts and present opinions effectively.

English - Literature

The syllabus enables students to read, interpret and evaluate texts through the study of literature in English. They develop an understanding of literal meaning, relevant contexts and of the deeper themes or attitudes that may be expressed. Through their studies, students learn to recognize and appreciate the ways in which writers use English to achieve a range of effects, and will be able to present an informed, personal response to the material they have studied. The syllabus also encourages the exploration of wider and universal issues, promoting students' better understanding of themselves and of the world around them.

English - Second Language

Cambridge IGCSE English as a Second Language is designed for students who already have a working knowledge of the language and who wish to consolidate their understanding in order to progress in their academic or professional career. The qualification reflects the widespread use of English in education and commerce, and also in entertainment. The aim is to achieve a level of practical communication ideal for everyday use, which can also form the basis for further, more in-depth language study. In Syllabus 0510, marks for the oral component do not contribute to the overall grade candidates receive for the written components. A count-in oral component is offered in Syllabus 0511.

Humanities

Geography

Through the IGCSE Geography syllabus, students will develop a 'sense of place' by looking at the world around them on a local, regional and global scale. Students will examine a range of natural and man-made environments, and learn about some of the processes which affected their development. They will also look at the ways in which people interact with their environment and the opportunities and challenges an

environment can present, thereby gaining a deeper insight into the different communities and cultures that exist around the world.

History

The History IGCSE syllabus investigates the major international issues of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries within the Western world. Regional case studies are analyzed and evaluated. The emphasis is on both historical knowledge and on the skills required for historical research. Students learn about the nature of cause and effect, continuity and change, similarity and difference and find out how to use and understand historical evidence as part of their studies. IGCSE History will stimulate any student already interested in the past, providing a basis for further study, and also encouraging a lifelong interest in the subject. Both coursework and non-coursework options are available.

Languages

French - Foreign Language

This is an examination designed for students learning French as a foreign language. The aim is to develop an ability to use the language effectively for purposes of practical communication. The course is based on the linked language skills of listening, reading, speaking and writing, and these are built on as students progress through their studies. The syllabus also aims to offer insights into the culture and civilization of countries where the language is spoken, thus encouraging positive attitudes towards language learning and towards speakers of foreign languages.

German - First Language

Designed for students whose mother tongue is German, this First Language syllabus develops the ability to communicate clearly, accurately and effectively. Students learn how to employ a wide-ranging vocabulary, use correct grammar, spelling and punctuation, and develop a personal style and an awareness of the audience being addressed. Students are also encouraged to read widely, both for their own enjoyment and in order to develop an appreciation of how writers achieve their effects. The syllabus also complements other areas of study by encouraging skills of more general application.

German - Foreign Language

This is an examination designed for students learning German as a foreign language. The aim is to develop an ability to use the language effectively for purposes of practical communication. The course is based on the linked language skills of listening, reading, speaking and writing, and these are built on as students progress through their studies. The syllabus also aims to offer insights into the culture and civilization of countries where the language is spoken, thus encouraging positive attitudes towards language learning and towards speakers of foreign languages.

Japanese - First Language

Designed for students whose mother tongue is Japanese, this First Language syllabus develops the overall ability to communicate with clarity and accuracy. During the course students will develop the four basic language skills of listening, speaking, reading and writing. Students will be required to read texts from a wide range of literary genres and deal with a variety of topics that include education, media, youth culture, languages, history, science, psychology, health, cultural comparison, Japanese society and other social issues. Students will also learn advanced grammar and kanji characters. The course ensures students acquire necessary skills of critical reading, literary analysis and writing for different purposes.

Korean - First Language

Designed for students whose mother tongue is Korean, this First Language syllabus develops the ability to communicate clearly, accurately and effectively. Students learn how to employ a wide-ranging vocabulary, use correct grammar, spelling and punctuation, and develop a personal style and an awareness of the audience being addressed. Students are also encouraged to read widely, both for their own enjoyment and in order to develop an appreciation of how writers achieve their effects. The syllabus also complements other areas of study by encouraging skills of more general application.

Spanish - Foreign Language

This is an examination designed for students learning Spanish as a foreign language. The aim is to develop an ability to use the language effectively for purposes of practical communication. The course is based on the linked language skills of listening, reading, speaking and writing, and these are built on as students progress through their studies. The syllabus also aims to offer insights into the culture and civilization of countries where the language is spoken, thus encouraging positive attitudes towards language learning and towards speakers of foreign languages.

Mathematics

An essential subject for all students, IGCSE Mathematics is a fully examined course which encourages the development of mathematical knowledge as a key life skill, and as a basis for more advanced study. The syllabus aims to build students' confidence by helping them develop a feel for numbers, patterns and relationships, and places a strong emphasis on solving problems and presenting and interpreting results. Students also learn how to communicate and reason using mathematical concepts.

Science

Biology

As well as a focus on biology, and with an emphasis on human biology, the IGCSE Biology syllabus enables students to better understand the technological world in which they live, and take an informed interest in science and scientific developments.

Students learn about the basic principles of biology through a mix of theoretical and practical studies. Students also develop an understanding of the scientific skills essential for further study, which are useful in everyday life. As they progress, students learn how science is studied and practiced, and become aware that the results of scientific research can have both good and bad effects on individuals, communities and the environment.

Chemistry

As well as a subject focus, the IGCSE Chemistry syllabus enables students to better understand the technological world in which they live, and take an informed interest in science and scientific developments. Students learn about the basic principles of Chemistry through a mix of theoretical and practical studies. Students also develop an understanding of the scientific skills essential for further study, skills which are useful in everyday life. As they progress, students learn how science is studied and practised, and become aware that the results of scientific research can have both good and bad effects on individuals, communities and the environment.

Physical Education

The syllabus provides candidates with an opportunity to study both the practical and theoretical aspects of physical education. It is designed to foster enjoyment in physical activity by providing students with an opportunity to take part in a range of physical activities. By following the course students will be able to develop an understanding of effective and safe physical performance and to appreciate the necessity for sound understanding of the principles, practices and training that underpin improved performance, better health and well-being.

Students have to hand in two written assignments by analyzing another student in two of their chosen sports, as well as composing a six-week training plan. In addition students have to demonstrate physical performance including video footage in 4 selected sports. In the case of external sports, only one is allowed and video footage has to be handed in. Exceptions are sports which are can be tested objectively such as cross country and competitive swimming.

Physics

As well as a subject focus, the IGCSE Physics syllabus equips students with a better understanding of the technological world in which they live, and enables them to take an informed interest in science and scientific developments reported in the media. Students learn about the basic principles of Physics and also develop an understanding of the scientific skills essential for further study, many of which are also transferable to other contexts. As they progress, students learn how science is studied and practised, and become aware that the results of scientific research can have both good and bad effects on individuals, communities and the environment.

Social Sciences

Business Studies

The IGCSE Business Studies syllabus develops students' understanding of business activity in the public and private sectors, and the importance of innovation and change. Students learn how the major types of business organization are established, financed and run, and how their activities are regulated. Factors influencing business decision-making are also considered, as are the essential values of cooperation and interdependence. Through their studies, students not only learn about business concepts and techniques but also enhance related skills such as numeracy and enquiry. The syllabus provides both a foundation for further study, and is an ideal preparation for the world of work.

Economics

The Economics syllabus will develop an understanding of economic terminology and principles and of basic economic theory. Students will learn about the economics of developed and developing nations and how these interrelate. They will also learn to handle simple data and undertake economic analysis, evaluate information and discriminate between facts and value judgments in economic issues. A foundation for further study, the syllabus also encourages a better understanding of the world in which students live, and helps them play an active part in the decision-making process, whether as consumers, producers or citizens of the local, national and international community.

Technology

Computer Studies

By following the Computer Studies syllabus, students foster an interest in, enjoyment of, and confidence in the use of computing. They develop an appreciation of the range and power of computer applications and solve problems using computing; their studies include systems analysis, algorithm design and programming concepts. IGCSE Computer Studies students consider a broad range of computer applications, so as to provide an understanding of the power and versatility of the computer and the benefits of its use, but also its limitations and potential disadvantages. IGCSE Computer Studies is an ideal foundation for further study, and the skills learnt can also be used in other areas of study and in everyday life.

The Arts

Art and Design

The IGCSE Art and Design syllabus aims to encourage a personal response by stimulating imagination, sensitivity, conceptual thinking, powers of observation and analytical ability. Students gain confidence and enthusiasm as they develop technical skills in two and three dimensional form and composition, and are able to identify and solve problems in visual and tactile forms. Students also learn how to develop ideas

from initial attempts to final solutions. An ideal foundation for further study, IGCSE Art and Design also develops a greater awareness of the role played by the visual arts in society and in history, broadening cultural horizons and individual experience.

It is a two year course in grades 9 and 10. The course will offer a practical exam in the second year. This will include one 10 hour exam called Coursework and an 8 hour exam set by Cambridge called Observational. Both exams are "hands on" and take place on five Saturdays during the school year. Final work, studies and investigation workbooks will be sent to Cambridge for external marking.

Music

The IGCSE Music syllabus is taught over a 2 year time span in grades 9 and 10, during which students learn the history of western music, learn traditional music theory and mechanics, and are also introduced to the music of several non-western musical cultures. Prior training on an instrument or as a singer is necessary for the course.

IGCSE Music Students will listen to, study, perform, compose, and analyze music, which will encourage their aesthetic understanding, creativity, and performance skills. They will also develop critical listening skills and an appreciation for music of varied styles, which provides an ideal foundation for future music study. In addition to these general topics, one non-western musical culture and one western classical piece will be examined in detail during Grade 10.

The IGCSE Music grade is comprised of 3 components: 40% is derived from a written exam, which assesses music history, theory, and listening skills as well as the prepared western and non-western music pieces designated annually by Cambridge. The rest of the student's score is derived from coursework: 30% from original music compositions and 30% for recorded music performances.

University Advisors' Note

The International General Certificate of Secondary Education is a highly regarded qualification across the world that our students at ISF are encouraged to sit. We offer courses in all subjects that students take in Grade 10 and students can sit the appropriate external examinations either at the end of Grade 10 or Grade 11.

Having good passes in these IGCSE examinations certainly enhances a student's university application. Passes in English First Language and Mathematics IGCSE are mandatory for most university courses to the United Kingdom; passes in additional subjects are desirable.

Universities in the United States of America have also indicated that they acknowledge the value of IGCSEs and would like them to be included in students' applications.

More broadly the IGCSE qualification, which is externally set and marked, provides an excellent opportunity for students to experience the reality of external examinations. This involves developing good study skills, going through the process of organized revision and experiencing at first hand the pressure of the examination.

This is ideal, early experience of what lies in wait for them in Grade 12 when they sit their final IB or AP examinations.

Roger Williams & Buddy Tobias
ISF University and Careers Advisors

Recognition of IGCSE in Hessen

A. Prerequisites for the Recognition of IGCSE as Equivalent to the Hessian Secondary Level Qualification (Mittlerer Abschluss)

5 subjects (grades A*-C):

1. Language
2. Language
3. Maths
4. One Physical Science (e.g. Physics, Chemistry, Biology or Science)
5. One Social Science (e.g. History, Geography or Economics)

IGCSE English First Language is acceptable but not English Second Language or other EFL qualifications.

Grades 9 and 10 must be successfully completed.

B. Prerequisites for the Recognition of IGCSE as Equivalent to the Hessian Hauptschul-Qualification

5 subjects (at least grades G):

1. Language
2. Language
3. Maths
4. One Physical Science (e.g. Physics, Chemistry, Biology or Science)
5. One Social Science (e.g. History, Geography or Economics)

IGCSE English First Language is acceptable but not English Second Language or other EFL qualifications.

Grades 9 and 10 must be successfully completed.