

MAKING SENSE OF THE BRITISH CURRICULUM

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What have we seen of foreign HS credentials at York?

- In 2007 we received over **23,000** applications for York programs from nearly **21,000** “105D/F” applicants.
- During 2007 we processed approximately **5000** applications from more than **3000** applicants presenting foreign HS credentials.
- Of these, approximately **350** applicants identified as “**GCE**” on their OUAC applications submitted **500** applications to York programs.

A BIT OF AN OVERVIEW



OK: What is the "British Curriculum" anyway?

**An excellent summary is available at:
United Kingdom - Education System**

IAU: World Higher Education Database (WHED) at
<http://www.unesco.org/iau/onlinedatabases/index.html>

Some School Leaving and Higher Education credentials:

General Certificate of Secondary Education (GCSE)

General Certificate of Education Advanced Level (GCE-A levels)

First Diploma

National Diploma

Higher National Certificate

Higher National Diploma

Certificate

Diploma.....etc.

STRUCTURE OF THE EDUCATION SYSTEM



- Secondary education covers schooling from the age of eleven to the minimum school leaving age of sixteen.
- Pupils follow a common curriculum leading to the GCSE and VCSE. They may combine a number of GCSEs, VCSEs or a combination of both.
- (Age 16+) At some schools, pupils may stay on at a school sixth form for a further two years when they sit for the General Certificate of Education Advanced Level (GCE A Levels) or the General Certificate of Education Advanced Subsidiary examinations (GCE AS examinations), or vocational courses leading usually to a Vocational Certificate of Education Advanced Level/Vocational Certificate of Education Advanced Subsidiary Level).
- Further education colleges also offer these courses.

AND NOW A WORD FROM EDEXCEL



In 1951, the **General Certificate of Education (GCE)** was introduced and the University Entrance & School Examinations Council took over the responsibilities of the Matriculation & School Examinations Council, which had been set up in 1930. This was then replaced by the University of London School Examinations Board (ULSEB), which was then succeeded by ULEAC – known as **London Examinations** - in 1991.

Edexcel was formed in 1996 by the merger of the **Business & Technology Education Council (BTEC)**, the country's leading provider of vocational qualifications, and the **University of London Examinations & Assessment Council (ULEAC)**, one of the major exam boards for GCSEs and A levels.

In 1974, the **Business Education Council (BEC)** was established. Within 18 months, BEC took over responsibility for ONCs, ONDs, HNCs, HNDs and other qualifications. BEC merged with TEC in 1984 to form the Business & Technology Education Council (**BTEC**). This then merged with **London Examinations** in 1996 to form **Edexcel**.

In June 2003 the Edexcel Foundation entered into a partnership arrangement with **Pearson PLC**, the biggest educational services company in the world

CAMBRIDGE INTERNATIONAL EXAMINATIONS (CIE)



<http://www.cie.org.uk/aboutcie>

- University of Cambridge International Examinations (CIE) is the world's largest provider of international qualifications for 14–19 year olds. CIE is part of the University of Cambridge and a not-for-profit organisation.
- CIE offers a broad range of qualifications, both academic and vocational. These include general qualifications including Cambridge IGCSE, Cambridge International A Level, Cambridge O Level, and Cambridge Pre-U, a new post-16 qualification, plus a range of vocational Cambridge International Diplomas.
- CIE operates in 150 countries around the world including the UK and Europe, South Asia, the Middle East, Asia Pacific, North America, Central and South America and Africa...work with around 7,000 examiners

EDEXCEL QUALIFICATIONS



- GCSE's
- GCSE vocational subjects
- GCE A levels and AS levels
- Vocational GCE A levels and AS levels
- GNVQ's
- BTEC Foundation courses
- BTEC First Diplomas
- BTEC National Awards, Certificates and Diplomas
- BTEC Higher National Certificates and Diplomas (HNC's and HND's)
- NVQ's
- Entry level qualifications
- Key Skills qualifications
- BTEC short courses

STRUCTURE OF THE EDUCATION SYSTEM



<http://www.edexcel.org.uk/studying/academic/options>

Qualifications you can take pre-16

GCSEs – General Certificate of Secondary Education

GCSEs were first introduced in 1986 and are well tried and tested examinations in a wide range of subjects in humanities, sciences, arts, languages, maths and technology... There are no formal entry requirements and no lower or upper age limits. Students normally study up to 10 subjects over a two-year period.

Qualifications you can take at 16+

Advanced Level Qualifications

Advanced level qualifications are demanding courses. They typically require two years full-time study after GCSE. Good results in these qualifications provide an effective way of entering higher education or a profession. Schools and colleges usually expect students to have obtained grades A* - C in several subjects at GCSE before taking an Advanced level course.

STRUCTURE OF THE EDUCATION SYSTEM



Pre-higher education:

- In the UK the duration of **compulsory** education is: Age of entry: 5, Age of exit: 16

Types of Schools providing **Secondary Education** include:

- Comprehensive Modern Schools, Secondary Modern Schools, Grammar Schools (or Academic Secondary Schools) and City Technology Colleges (CTC's)
- Program length: 5 years (age 11-16)
- Certificate or diploma awarded: **General Certificate of Secondary Education (GCSE)/Vocational Certificate of Secondary Education (VCSE)**

GCSE SUBJECTS OFFERED BY EDEXCEL



Arabic; Art & Design; Applied Art & Design (Double Award); Astronomy; Business & Communications Systems; Business Studies; Business Studies & Economics (Nuffield-BP); Applied Business (Double Award); Chinese; Design & Technology; Drama; English (A); English (B); English Literature; Engineering (Double Award); French; Geography; German; Health & Social Care (Double Award); History; Applied ICT (Double Award); Italian; Japanese; Leisure & Tourism (Double Award); Manufacturing (Double Award); Mathematics (A); Mathematics (B); Modern Greek; Music; Physical Education; Religious Studies; Russian; Science (Linear) A (Single & Double Award); Science (Modular) B (Single & Double Award); Biology; Chemistry; Physics; Applied Science (Double Award); Spanish; Urdu.

STRUCTURE OF THE EDUCATION SYSTEM



Sixth Form Schools

- Program length: 2 years (age 16-18)
- Certificate/diploma awarded: **General Certificate of Education Advanced Level/General Certificate of Education Advanced Subsidiary/Vocational Certificate of Education Advanced Level/Vocational Certificate of Education Advanced Subsidiary Level**

SIXTH FORM SCHOOLS AND ADVANCED LEVELS



There are two types of Advanced level qualifications:

GCE (Advanced Subsidiary or Advanced). These cover the traditional 'A level' subjects: humanities, sciences, social sciences, business, arts, languages, maths and so on.

VCE (Advanced Subsidiary, Advanced or Double Award) Also known as 'Vocational A levels', these new qualifications have replaced Advanced GNVQs. They cover work-related subjects such as tourism, hospitality, engineering and healthcare.

Advanced Subsidiary courses consist of 3 units, Advanced courses have 6 units and usually take two years to complete. More private reading and research is required. For really in-depth learning you can undertake a 12 unit VCE (Double Award) in one subject or, if you are taking an Advanced GCE, you can take the Advanced Extension Awards available in a range of subjects. It is possible to combine GCE subjects with VCE courses. Students are encouraged to broaden their learning experience by mixing academic and vocational courses.

AS AND ADVANCED LEVEL COURSES



- The Curriculum, Evaluation and Management (CEM) Centre at the University of Durham has done extensive research and monitoring of student progress at the Advanced level.
- The best predictor of success at AS/A level is considered to be the student's average GCSE points score (**taking the average of all subjects**). This is based on the following allocation of points to G.C.S.E. grades:

Grade A*=8 A=7 B=6 C=5 D=4 E=3 F=2 G=1

Average GSCE score:

5
6
7
8

Predicted A/AS level grade :

D/E in each subject
 C/D “ “
 B/C “ “
 A/B “ “

AS AND ADVANCED LEVEL COURSES



Advanced Subsidiary (AS) level:

- The AS (Advanced Subsidiary) level consists of the first 2 modules of a subject, each of which is assessed. This can be a qualification in its own right – some students take one or more of their subjects to AS level only.
- To study a subject to AS level in the “Lower” Sixth or first year of Sixth Form, the subject may be studied for 320 minutes per week and be assessed/examined at the end of the academic year (each module is assessed by modular examination. Some subjects require students do their first modular examination in January of the Lower Sixth. Others do not enter students until the Summer session in May/June of the Lower Sixth.)
- Exam boards allow students to re-sit each module examination.

ADVANCED LEVEL SUBJECTS



Courses offered at the Advanced Level may include:

Accounting
Art
Biology
Business Studies
Chemistry
Chinese
Computer Studies
Design And Technology
Drama and Theatre Studies
Economics
English
Geography
Mathematics
Physics
Languages...etc.

AS AND ADVANCED LEVEL COURSES



Advanced (A) Level:

- Generally speaking, to qualify for an Advanced level qualification, students must study the first two modules at AS level and then take modules 3 & 4 in the “Upper” Sixth form or second year of studies. All 4 modules are assessed and a single, composite, grade is awarded. Each A level subject is studied for 320 minutes per week for two years.

- Some A level subjects do not require the AS subject as a prerequisite (e.g. Art or Business) and the student may gain admission to the “A2” component based on a portfolio evaluation or completion of a related course e.g. Economics.

- Many international schools offer the UK curriculum at locations in the middle and far east and most are offering the EDEXCEL or CIE curriculum at all levels.

- Examinations might be internally set, internally marked and externally moderated (by EDEXCEL/CIE)

EXAMINATIONS



Process:

1. Sit the exam (usually November, May or June)
2. Exam is sent to an examiner
3. Marked
4. Marking is checked by a Senior examiner
5. Returned to Examinations Authority
6. Exams are checked, logged in and filed
7. Award meetings/grade reviews are held
8. Marks are sent back to the school
9. Student is informed

AS AND ADVANCED LEVEL COURSES



- Subjects offered at the Advanced level that **do** have specific prerequisites may have more stringent entry requirements in terms of previous years grades.
- Biology A level may require that students have GCSE Science **and** GCSE Additional Science with a Grade of B in both. In addition they may have to present GCSE Mathematics with a minimum grade of C.
- Mathematics A levels may require at least a grade of B in GCSE Math. It is not recommended to students with marginal skills in some topics (i.e. Algebra). Mathematics is divided into 3 branches at the AS and Advanced levels:
 1. Pure Mathematics: AS & A levels, includes algebra, trigonometry and calculus
 2. Mechanics: Mathematical modelling
 3. Statistics

WHAT ABOUT GRADES?



<http://www.unesco.org/iau/onlinedatabases/index.html>

GRADING SYSTEM:

Usual grading system in secondary school

Full Description: Alphabetical system A to E.

A: excellent/outstanding; B: above average; C: average; D: below average; E: failing.

Highest on scale: A

Pass/fail level: C/D

Lowest on scale: E

ADMISISON REQUIREMENTS



Students presenting UK/UK-patterned credentials must present:

- Minimum of 2 Advanced level passes and 3 GCSE or IGCSE/'O' level passes;
- 2 Advanced Subsidiary level courses may be substituted for one Advanced level course.
- A minimum average of C is required on Advanced level and GCSE/IGCSE/'O' level courses
- Applicants may be considered for entry based on predicted grades
- Transfer credit may be granted for Advanced level courses *only*, with final grades of C or above to a maximum of 18 credits (depending on the program)

BTEC – AN ALTERNATIVE QUALIFICATION



<http://www.edexcel.org.uk/studying/hn/about/>

BTEC HIGHER NATIONAL DIPLOMAS:

BTEC Higher National Certificates (HNCs) and Diplomas (HNDs) are a **higher education choice** for students who want a more practical qualification that prepares them for working life. They are available at over 400 universities and colleges throughout England and Wales.

Entry requirements

There are no specific entry requirements for each course, but to be accepted onto a BTEC Higher National you will usually need one of the following:

At least 1 A Level

A VCE (formerly Advanced GNVQ)

A BTEC National Certificate or Diploma

A Level 3 NVQ

BTEC SUBJECT AREAS



[Art & Design](#)

[Business](#)

[Construction & The Built Environment](#)

[Engineering](#)

[Health & Care](#)

[Hospitality Management](#)

[IT & Computing](#)

[Land & Environment](#)

[Leisure, Sport, Travel & Tourism](#)

[Media](#)

[Performing Arts](#)

[Science](#)

BTEC Higher National – stepping stone to a degree

Students can carry on studying after a HND. A BTEC Higher National qualification usually leads into the second or third year of a related degree.

SO WHAT ABOUT THE FUTURE?



From the BBC (2006):

- Alternative A-level exam produced...The Cambridge exam board is refining its alternative qualification for students aiming for “top” universities.
- From 2008 the Pre-U exam would involve studying three subjects over two years, with final exams and an extended essay. Unlike AS or A-levels, it would not be modular and split into two parts.
- The University of Cambridge International Examinations (CIE) said it had developed the Pre-U in response to demand from teachers wanting to prepare students for higher education more effectively. It is being developed with independent schools and Russell Group universities and a specialist school representative (Oxford, Cambridge, LSE etc.).
- Quote: “A-levels were no longer “fit for purpose” in challenging or distinguishing between the brightest pupils. “I don't think it is a scandal that they are easier. What I think is a scandal is that they have become easier but that official sources are in denial about it.”
- A record one-in-four students left school in 2007 with the top grade possible in their A levels; of 805,000 candidates 25.3% received A's; overall 97% passed. (Similar results experienced with GCSE exams)

SO WHAT ABOUT THE FUTURE?



- A new requirement in England to be in education until the age of 18 was announced in 2006.
- By 2013, all pupils will have to stay in education or training until the end of the school year in which they turn 17. By 2015, this leaving age will be raised to the 18th birthday.
- Specialised Diplomas will be introduced in September 2008. The government is hopeful that the new offerings will decrease the numbers of students aged 16+ leaving education permanently. Schools are required to approach local employers to create cooperative opportunities.
- New Diploma qualifications will be offered in Science, Languages and Humanities beginning in 2011 and according to the government may be seen as the replacement qualification for GCSE's and Advanced levels for university entrance.

THANK YOU



QUESTIONS?????????