

GCE A-LEVEL INFORMATION SHEET 2019 **(FOR EXTERNAL APPLICANTS)**

Thank you for your interest in the International Stream (UK GCE Advanced Levels).

In September 2019 students can apply to study **three** or **four** of the following GCE A-level subjects:

- Art & Design
- Biology
- Business Studies
- Chemistry
- Chinese*
- Drama & Theatre
- English Language & Literature
- French
- Geography
- History
- Mathematics
- Physical Education
- Physics
- Religious Studies
- Spanish (AS-level only)

**Please note that GCE A-level Chinese may not be accepted by universities in Hong Kong.*

Most students choose to study **four** GCE AS-level subjects in Form 5 and they are expected to continue with just **three** of these subjects in Form 6. (NB. Students who perform very well in the internal or AS-level examinations at the end of Form 5 may be permitted to continue with four subjects during the second year of study.)

Since GCE A-level courses are designed to build on knowledge and skills acquired at IGCSE level, students must choose subjects that have already been studied at IGCSE during Forms 3 and 4.

Please state your **preferences** on the application form.

Subjects need to be blocked against each other for timetabling purposes and, while the school will try to minimize any timetable clashes, it is inevitable that some combinations of subjects will not be possible. In view of this please also choose one additional subject that you would be prepared to take in the event of a timetable clash. (If your preferred combination of subjects is not possible a member of staff will discuss this with you in person.)

Please note that a minimum of 10 students is usually required to make a course viable.

Compulsory Subjects

In addition to the four GCE A-level elective subjects, all students enrolled in the International Stream in Forms 5 and 6 are required to study the following non-public examination subjects:

- **Chinese Language & Cultural Studies (CLCS)**
- **Philosophy & Religious Studies (PRS)**
- **Physical Education (General PE)**
- **Personal & Social Education (PSE)**
- **Independent Living**

The Education Bureau mandates that all students take Chinese and it is therefore a compulsory part of the curriculum.

Chinese Language & Cultural Studies (CLCS) is designed for students who are not studying GCE A-level Chinese as an elective subject. This course contains two parts: *Chinese Language Learning* and *Chinese Cultural Studies*.

In the *Chinese Language Learning* part, students will be divided into sets according to their Chinese language background and ability. Students will develop their Chinese language ability in reading, writing, listening and speaking according to their level. In the *Chinese Cultural Studies* part, students will explore various aspects of Chinese culture including values, morals, history, art, science, etc.

Chinese Language & Cultural Studies is a non-public examination oriented subject, but students will be assessed internally and are expected to complete various assignments under the guidance and supervision of the teacher.

Please note that students studying GCE A-level Chinese are not required to study CLCS.

Form 5 GCE A-Level Entrance Requirements

The entrance requirements are as follows:

- **At least five IGCSE passes at grade C or better.** (Grade B or better is expected in each subject to be studied at GCE A-level.)
- Students wishing to study GCE A-levels in Mathematics, Biology, Chemistry or Physics **must** have taken an IGCSE in the subject at the **Extended Level**. It is highly recommended that students wishing to study GCE A-level Physics also study GCE A-level Mathematics.
- Students wishing to study GCE A-level English Language & Literature **must** have taken IGCSE First Language English at the **Extended Level**. Grade C or better in IGCSE English Literature is also preferred.
- For students who do not have any public examinations results, acceptance will be based on her/his academic record. A mock exam mark of at least 60% *and* an average level of attainment of at least 60% is expected in each subject to be studied at GCE AS-level.

Applying for GCE A-Levels in the International Stream

Please complete the **Application Form for GCE A-Levels in Form 5 (2019 – 2020)** and submit it to the Admissions Office along with one application letter per GCE A-level subject.

The deadline for submitting applications to study GCE A-levels in Forms 5 and 6 is **Monday 11th February**. Please note that applications submitted by this date will be considered first.

Once the application has been processed, students and parents may be invited to attend an interview. Students may also be asked to take some benchmark tests on **Saturday 9th March** to assess their suitability to study a particular subject at GCE A-level. Please reserve this date

just in case. Students needing to take any benchmark tests will be informed on or before Monday 5th March. **NB. Students applying for any A-level subject which was not studied at IGCSE level will be required to sit a benchmark test.**

Students will be informed of the result of their application on **Wednesday 10th April**. If the application is successful, students will either be given a general offer or a conditional offer of acceptance. Conditional offers depend on IGCSE results which will be released in mid-August 2019.

To secure the offer, a non-refundable deposit of \$5,900 (equivalent to one month's school fees) is required by **Wednesday 24th April** or **within two weeks** of the date on the acceptance letter. If you take up your place, the deposit will be put towards payment of the first month's school fees. Cheques should be made payable to 'YMCA of Hong Kong Christian College'. (NB. Fee remission is available for tuition fees only and parents should apply through the school's Fee Remission Scheme.)

School fees for the International Stream are payable in ten monthly installments of \$5,900 during Form 5 and five installments (September to January) of \$11,800 during Form 6.

Changing Subjects

Subject changes may be possible after a place in the International Stream has been offered, but cannot be guaranteed. Please note that no subject changes will be permitted after the first two weeks of the new academic year. If your daughter/son wishes to change subjects, please write a letter to Mr. Andrew Higgins, Deputy Principal, stating the reason.

Self Study

Every year, the school receives requests from students to self-study. While it is commendable that students are very keen to challenge themselves and obtain additional qualifications, it should be noted that self-studying at this level is exceptionally difficult. GCE A-level courses are very demanding and academically challenging, even when receiving instruction from a subject specialist for 5 lessons a week. This course of action is therefore not advised, with the exception of languages for native speakers, e.g. native Cantonese or Mandarin speakers generally perform well in GCE A-level Chinese.

Since **three** good GCE A-level grades are sufficient for entrance to the vast majority of universities worldwide, there really is no need to study anything else. It must be noted that a substantial amount of extra time is needed to self-study another subject which can have an adverse effect on performance in the subjects which are part of the regular taught curriculum. The loss of overall study time resulting from self-studying another subject must therefore be taken into consideration.

Requests to self-study any additional GCE A-level subject should be submitted in writing to Mr. Andrew Higgins, Deputy Principal, stating the reasons why it is needed. Approval may be granted if, after consulting with subject teachers, it is determined to be beneficial. If approved, the academic performance of students who are self-studying will be closely monitored to ensure that they are able to cope with the additional demands that this places on them. If there are signs that a student is struggling, this decision may need to be re-evaluated.