

GCE A-LEVEL INFORMATION SHEET (2023 – 2024)

EXTERNAL APPLICANTS

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

All students in the International Stream in Forms 5 and 6 study Chinese as a **core** subject plus **three** of the following GCE A-level elective subjects:

- Biology
- Business
- Chemistry
- English Literature
- Geography
- History
- Mathematics
- Physical Education
- Physics
- Psychology

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

Subjects have to be blocked against each other for timetabling purposes. The following timetable blocks in the table below are based on the recent intention survey and were formed to minimize clashes so that as many of you as possible are able to study your preferred subjects.

Please rank your preferred subjects in each timetable block on the online application form.

Block A	Block B	Block C
Chemistry	Biology	History
English Literature	Business	Mathematics
Mathematics	Chemistry	Physics
Physical Education	Geography	Psychology

Please note that a minimum of 5 – 10 students is usually required to make a course viable.

Compulsory Subjects

The Education Bureau mandates that all students study Chinese and it is therefore a compulsory part of the curriculum in the International Stream. The following courses will be offered:

- **GCE A-level Chinese** – This course is designed for students who have a strong background in Chinese and have already achieved grade B or better in IGCSE Chinese First Language or IGCSE Chinese as a Second Language.
- **Hanyu Shuiping Kaoshi (HSK)** – Similar to IELTS, which is used as evidence of English language proficiency, the HSK is an official examination designed to assess the Chinese language proficiency of non-native Chinese speakers from beginners (level 1) to advanced (level 6). This course is designed for students who have a good background in Chinese and have already achieved IGCSE Chinese (Mandarin) Foreign Language.

The level of Chinese studied will depend on students' language learning background. The school will make a careful assessment before determining the most appropriate course.

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

- **Philosophy & Religious Studies (PRS)**
- **Physical Education (General PE)**
- **Personal, Social, Health & Economic Education (PSHE)**
- **Independent Living (Form 6 only)**

Form 5 GCE A-Level Entrance Requirements

The entrance requirements are as follows:

- **At least five IGCSE passes at grade B 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 Literature **must** have taken IGCSE First Language English at the **Extended Level**. Grade B 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 GCE AS-level elective subject to be studied.

Applying for GCE A-Levels in the International Stream

Please complete the online **Application for Form 5 GCE A-Level (2023–2024)** and handwrite one application letter for each GCE A-level elective subject you wish to study. Combine all three application letters into a **single pdf document** and email it to Ms. Cherry Chen at cherry.chen@yhkcc.edu.hk.

The deadline for submitting applications to study GCE A-levels in Forms 5 and 6 is **Friday 28th April, 2023**. Once the application has been processed, students and parents may be invited to attend an interview.

Benchmark Tests

To assess their suitability to study a particular elective subject at GCE A-level, students may also be asked to take some benchmark tests. **Students applying for any GCE A-level subject which was not studied at IGCSE level will be required to sit a benchmark test.**

Changing Subjects

Subject changes may be possible after a place in the International Stream in Forms 5 and 6 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 six lessons a week. This course of action is therefore not advised.

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, briefly 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. In general, students are expected to achieve at least grade B in all Form 5 GCE AS-level examinations in order to continue self-studying a subject in Form 6.