

IRIS School
Key Stage 3& 4
Options Booklet

Introduction to Subject Options

You have reached an exciting point in your educational path where you start to focus your learning efforts into areas you find most interesting and enjoyable. Our Key Stage 4 provision at IRIS School follows the GCSE programme. The information in this options booklet will give you an idea of what studying each subject entail, how you will be assessed and what potential jobs and degrees are available to you if you choose to study that subject. The guiding principles of our options process are:

- To provide a broad and balanced curriculum with a strong academic core
- To ensure that everyone has access to all the curriculum areas
- To meet the learning needs of individuals
- To ensure high expectations and achievement for all
- To provide clear and unambiguous communication with students and parents
- To prepare students to meet the future expectations of employers

Subject Choices

IRIS School is committed to the provision of a broad and balanced curriculum to meet the needs of all students, allowing them to succeed during Key Stage 4 and beyond into Post-16 education. We are committed, furthermore, to ensuring that all our learners acquire and develop the necessary skills, experience and qualifications needed for university and the world of work. All students at IRIS School will undertake the Core Subjects and will then have subjects to opt for from the Optional Subjects.

Core Subjects

At IRIS School, we run the following core courses:

English Language	English Literature	Mathematics	Biology	Chemistry	Physics
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Optional Subjects

Students choose one subject from each of the following option blocks.

Option Block 1	Option Block 2	Option Block 3	Option Block 4	Option Block 5
Arabic	History	Religious Studies	Business	French
Persian	Geography		Psychology	

Arabic

IRIS School is committed to the provision of a broad and balanced curriculum to meet the needs of all students, allowing them to succeed during Key Stage 4 and beyond into Post-16 education. We are committed, furthermore, to ensuring that all our learners acquire and develop the necessary skills, experience and qualifications needed for university and the world of work. All students at IRIS School will undertake the Core Subjects and will then have subjects to opt for from the Optional Subjects. All students who are Arabic passport holders can continue to study Arabic as a First Language (Arabic A) outlined by the Ministry of Education in Years 10 and 11. Students who follow this programme can complete a GCSE in Arabic (Modern Foreign Language Arabic) as an extra GCSE qualification.

Persian

All students who are Persian passport holders can continue to study Persian as a First Language outlined by the Ministry of Education in Years 10 and 11. Students who follow this programme can complete a GCSE in Persian (Modern Foreign Language Persian) as an extra GCSE qualification.

Islamic Studies

All Muslim students must study the Islamic Studies curriculum outlined by the Ministry of Education in Years 10 and 11. The Ministry of Education Islamic course is delivered alongside GCSE Religious studies to enable those students who wish to pursue this subject as an additional GCSE qualification.

Subject Guidance

Exam Board: Edexcel GCSE Arabic – (1AA1) – Specifications

Why study Arabic?

Our students are particularly well placed to excel in this subject, having had many years of Arabic education. If you enjoy meeting and talking to people from Arabic countries, finding out about their cultures, and learning how language works, then studying GCSE Arabic is an excellent choice for you.

What is the course content?

GCSE Arabic helps you explore a wide range of topics, from celebrations and festivals, through getting by as a tourist in an Arabic speaking country to international campaigns and events. You will learn about the Arabic culture through a range of interesting topics that will add to your understanding of the language and country.

How will students be assessed?

All candidates take four papers and each paper tests Modern Standard Arabic.

Paper 1 (40 Marks)	Paper 2 (45 Marks)	Paper 3 (40 Marks)	Paper 4 (45 Marks)
Listening	Reading	Speaking	Writing

What skills will students develop?

GCSE Arabic develops many skills, such as the ability to communicate clearly, be confident about speaking in public and writing coherently. This qualification will certainly add an extra

dimension to your personal skills profile which will impress anyone who reads your CV. This will put you in a stronger position to get a job in companies with international links or improve your employability if you would like to work abroad. It is an obvious advantage to being able to work or study in an Arabic-speaking country, and you will also find it easier to learn other languages. Completing GCSE Arabic is the foundation for studying Arabic courses in Sixth Form to further your knowledge of the language and culture.

What jobs/degrees are available to students who study this subject?

The skills developed by students who study languages, particularly those in a different language to their native tongue, show skills to universities and employers which are not developed elsewhere in the curriculum. Students who might not consider studying the subject directly at university may choose to add it as a minor, e.g., Business Management with Arabic. Studying Arabic opens a wide range of opportunities for students interested in teaching the language, or working a wide array of jobs in the Middle East. You could also be a representative for companies which requires the ability to speak the language.

Biology

Exam Board: AQA GCSE Biology (8461) – Specifications

Why study Biology?

Biology is the study of living things and, by studying GCSE Biology, students will gain an insight into the natural world. A qualification in GCSE Biology is an internationally recognised course that provides the base for a biology-related career or for further study into A Level.

What skills will students develop?

GCSE Biology develops a set of transferable skills including handling data, practical problem solving and applying the scientific method. Learners develop relevant attitudes, such as concern for accuracy and precision, enquiry, initiative, inventiveness and the essential scientific skills required for progression to further studies or employment.

What jobs/degrees are available to students who study this subject?

Choosing Biology will provide learners with career opportunities in a variety of professions including scientific and medical research, forensics, nursing, pharmacology, dentistry, veterinary science, paramedical, ecology, nutrition, personal training, biochemical engineering, environmental conservation and education.

Business Studies

Exam Board: AQA GCSE Business Studies (8432) – Specifications

Why study Business Studies?

Business Studies involves discovering why and how businesses are set up, what they aim to achieve and how they do it. It is designed to provide a grounding in the world of Business and the ability to calculate and interpret business data and the communication skills needed to support arguments with reasons.

What skills will students develop?

This course helps students to gain lifelong skills, including the ability to calculate and interpret business data, communication skills needed to support arguments with reasons and the ability to analyse business situations and reach decisions or judgements. The course balances a thorough knowledge and understanding of business and helps to develop the skills learners need for their next steps in education or employment.

What jobs/degrees are available to students who study this subject?

Studying GCSE Business provides a foundation for many degree courses such as business management, international business and qualifications in accounting and finance. Business Studies leads on to a wide variety of potential careers such as accountancy, banking, investment, financial services, general management, personnel management, management consultancy, public relations, retail management, sales and marketing.

Chemistry

Exam Board: AQA GCSE Chemistry (8462) – Specifications

Why study Chemistry?

From protecting the environment, to curing illness, chemistry underpins many aspects of our society. GCSE Chemistry allows students to gain an understanding of the contribution to society and the need for a culture of sustainable development through the study of elements and the compounds they form.

What skills will students develop?

AQA GCSE Chemistry develops a set of transferable skills including handling data, practical problem-solving and applying the scientific method. Learners develop relevant attitudes, such as concern for accuracy and precision, objectivity, integrity, enquiry, initiative and inventiveness. Students also acquire the essential scientific skills required for progression to further studies or employment.

What jobs/degrees are available to students who study this subject?

Choosing Chemistry will provide learners with career opportunities in a variety of professions including medicine, dentistry, forensic science, careers in the pharmaceutical or petrochemical sectors, environmental sciences, materials energy, oceanography, aerospace, law and education.

English Language

Exam Boards: AQA GCSE English (8700) – Specifications

Studying English will help student develop the ability to think critically and creatively, to express themselves with confidence and coherence, and to combine deep understanding with personal engagement in their responses to language. The course is designed to promote excellent achievement within the skill areas of speaking, listening, reading and writing.

What is the course content?

In English course, students will have the opportunity to develop the knowledge, skills and understanding of the following key objectives; reading, writing, speaking and listening. English as a first language goes into more depth considering candidates are usually taking the course with English as their mother tongue.

What skills will students develop?

In English Language course, students will develop the ability to communicate clearly, accurately and effectively when speaking and writing, learn to use a wide variety of vocabulary, and the correct grammar, spelling and punctuation, and to develop a personal style and an awareness of the audience being addressed.

What jobs/degrees are available to students who study this subject?

English course will provide an excellent grounding for any arts or humanities-based degree. The communication skills garnered from taking GCSE English open many career opportunities for students. Many students go on to study media, journalism, law, digital marketing, publishing, or teaching.

Religious Studies

Exam Board: AQA Religious Studies () – Specifications

Why study Religious Studies?

- The syllabus encourages students to develop lifelong skills and knowledge, including: an understanding of the importance of the major beliefs of Islam and of the early history of the Islamic community
- Evaluation skills to understand how these beliefs impact on the daily lives and thoughts of Muslims around the world
- Familiarity with the Qur'an and Hadith in Arabic
- Familiar with Christianity

How will students be assessed?

All candidates take two written papers and answer in English. Both papers must be taken for the candidate to be awarded a grade.

What skills will students develop?

GCSE Religious Studies will prepare students to have well-structured conversations with followers of other faiths. It will give students confidence to defend their religion by using evidence from Quran and hadeeth. Students develop a range of transferable skills to enable them to respond with confidence and enables them to adapt and thrive in different environments across educational stages.

What jobs/degrees are available to students who study this subject?

This course provides skills in critical thinking, reading, observation, and written and oral communication essential to any successful career. It also tends to open students' minds to new experiences and ways of approaching the world and to expose students to the diversity and complexities of the world around them. This course can be a useful option for a wide range of jobs, especially those that require you to work with the public, or involve helping people. Some of these might include teaching, working in charities, community development worker, advice worker and journalism.

Mathematics

Exam Board: Edexcel GCSE Mathematics () – Specifications

Why study Mathematics?

Studying GCSE Mathematics will help develop skills such as problem-solving, analysing data, communication, logic/critical thinking and attention to detail, which are important in everyday life.

What skills will students develop? Students will develop their problem-solving and reasoning skills by:

- making deductions and drawing conclusions from mathematical information
- constructing chains of reasoning
- presenting arguments and proofs
- interpreting and communicating information accurately

What jobs/degrees are available to students who study this subject?

Studying mathematics will open a wide variety of degrees and career opportunities. Students could go on to study either engineering or economics. Other common mathematics based careers include investment banking, statistical research, logistics, market research (for business), management consultancy, financial analysis, IT (systems analysis, development or research), software engineering, computer programming, or teaching.

Physics

Exam Board: AQA GCSE Physics (8463) – Specifications

Why study Physics?

Through studying GCSE Physics, you will develop your understanding of the core principles. It will also give you the chance to exercise more subject-specific skills in areas like astronomy, computational and experimental physics along with quantum mechanics

What skills will students develop?

AQA GCSE Physics develops a set of transferable skills including handling data, practical problem-solving and applying the scientific method. Learners develop relevant attitudes, such

as concern for accuracy and precision, objectivity, integrity, enquiry, initiative and inventiveness. They acquire the essential scientific skills required for progression to further studies or employment

What jobs/degrees are available to students who study this subject?

Choosing Physics will provide learners with career opportunities in a variety of professions in areas such as aerospace and defence, education, renewable and non-renewable energy, engineering, health and medicine, instrumentation, manufacturing, meteorology, climate change, nanotechnology, oil and gas, telecommunications and architecture.

Frequently Asked Questions

Do I have to take Arabic or Persian?

No, however, students can take them as an extra GCSE qualification.

Do I have to do English Language?

Yes, all students must study English.

How do I find more about subjects?

You can reach out to subject Heads of Departments. Their contact details can be found on the website.

What are the access arrangements for students taking their GCSEs?

Access arrangements is provided to remove barriers that may prevent students with specific needs reaching their full potential. Examination boards must authorise individual access arrangement applications where a student meets their specific criteria. Examples of the arrangements available include extended time, a scribe, a prompt, or rest breaks. The exam officer monitors the needs of students on an individual basis and contact parents if a student is entitled to access arrangements.

To be reviewed September 2024 by Subject Leaders