



Demystifying the Key Stage 4 and Key Stage 5 Curriculum



Table of Contents

Introduction	3
1. What Are IGCSEs?.....	3
2. Key Features of Pearson Edexcel IGCSEs.....	3
3. Subject Information and Codes.....	3
4. How iGCSE Grading Works	4
Comparison Between Old and New Grading Scales.....	5
5. Modular English, Maths and Science	5
English Language and Literature.....	5
Mathematics	5
Science	6
6. Science Pathways: Combined vs. Triple Science	6
Combined Science (Double Award)	6
Triple Science (Separate Sciences).....	6
7. Examination and Assessment Details.....	7
8. IGCSE Assessment Schedule	7
9. Parent Guide to BTEC Level 2 Qualifications	9
What Are BTEC Level 2 Qualifications?	9
How Are BTECs Assessed?	9
How Do BTECs Compare to IGCSEs?.....	10
International Recognition	10
Why Choose BTEC?.....	10
10. Supporting Your Child.....	11
11. Revision and Exam Preparation Guide	11
General Study Tips	11
Subject-Specific Strategies.....	11
Healthy Habits	11
How Parents Can Support	11
12. Frequently Asked Questions	12
13. Parent Guide to A-Levels	12
What Are A-Levels?	12
Why Choose A-Levels?	12



Structure of A-Level Courses	12
14. University Applications	13
15. Key Dates to Remember	13
16. FAQs	13
17. Parent Guide to Level 3 BTECs	14
What are Level 3 BTECs?	14
How Do BTECs Compare to A-Levels?	14
University Recognition.....	15
Ideal for Students Who:	15
18. Contact Information	16
Together, we can ensure your child's success at IGCSE and beyond.....	16

Introduction

At Capital School, we understand that the curriculum at Key Stages 4 and 5 can sometimes feel complex and full of unfamiliar terms. This booklet has been written to help parents better understand how the different qualifications — including our Level 2 BTECs and iGCSEs at KS4, and our Level 3 BTECs and new A Level provision at KS5 — fit together to provide clear, purposeful pathways for every student. Inside, you will find an explanation of what each qualification means, how they build upon one another, and how they prepare our students for success in further education, university, and beyond.

1. What Are IGCSEs?

The International General Certificate of Secondary Education (IGCSE) is a globally recognised qualification taken by students typically aged 14–16. It is the equivalent of the UK's GCSE and serves as excellent preparation for A Levels, the International Baccalaureate (IB), or other post-16 pathways.

With **Pearson Edexcel**, our chosen awarding body, students sit externally assessed examinations that test knowledge, understanding, and application across a range of subjects.

2. Key Features of Pearson Edexcel IGCSEs

- **Internationally Recognised:** Accepted by universities and employers worldwide.
 - **Rigorous and Fair Assessment:** Exams are designed to be accessible yet challenging.
 - **Broad Subject Range:** Students can choose subjects that fit their strengths, interests, and future aspirations.
 - **Modular Options in English, Maths and Science:** Flexible assessment structure that allows for staged examinations.
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3. Subject Information and Codes

Below is a list of the IGCSE subjects offered at Capital School Bahrain, alongside their **Pearson Edexcel subject codes**:

Subject	Subject Code
English Language A	4EA1



Subject	Subject Code
English Literature	4ET1
Mathematics A	4MA1
Biology	4BI1
Chemistry	4CH1
Physics	4PH1
Human Biology	4HB1
Science (Double Award)	4SD0
History	4HI1
Geography	4GE1
Business	4BS1
Economics	4EC1
ICT	4IT1
Computer Science	4CP1
Arabic	4AR1
Spanish	4SP1
Art & Design	4AD1
Physical Education (PE)	4PE1

4. How iGCSE Grading Works

Pearson Edexcel IGCSEs use the **9–1 grading system**, where 9 is the highest grade and 1 the lowest. This replaces the old A*–G system that was discontinued in 2017.

Comparison Between Old and New Grading Scales

New GCSE Grading Structure	Current GCSE Grading Structure
9	A*
8	A*
7	A
6	B
5	B
4	C
3	D
2	E
1	F
U	G
U	U

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Summer 2017



5. Modular English, Maths and Science

English Language and Literature

- Students can take exams in stages rather than all at the end of Year 11.
- Modular assessment allows parts of the course to be examined earlier, reducing pressure at the end of the two years.
- Retakes are possible for certain units to improve grades.

Mathematics

- Pearson Edexcel offers **modular Maths** where content is divided into two units.
- Students will sit the unit 1 exam at the end of year 10 (May/June) and the Unit 2 exam at the end of year 11 (May/June) the following year.
- This approach helps spread assessment, reduced the number of exams at the end of year 11 and ensures consistent progress, and provides opportunities for improvement.



Science

- Pearson Edexcel offers **modular Science** courses where content is divided into distinct units such as Biology, Chemistry, and Physics.
- Students sit exams for individual units at different times, and their best results across these units are carried forward.
- This modular approach allows for distributed assessment, supports steady academic progress, and gives students multiple chances to improve their understanding and performance.

Benefits of Modular Exams: - Reduced exam-day pressure. - More frequent feedback on progress. - Opportunities for pupils to retake units to achieve higher marks.

6. Science Pathways: Combined vs. Triple Science

At Capital School Bahrain, pupils can follow one of two Pearson Edexcel science routes:

Combined Science (Double Award)

- Students study Biology, Chemistry, and Physics but are awarded **two IGCSE grades** rather than three.
- The content is slightly less in-depth than the Triple Science pathway but still provides a solid foundation for A Level sciences.
- Grades are awarded on a **double scale** (e.g., 7-7, 6-6, 5-4). The two numbers may be the same or adjacent, reflecting overall performance.

Triple Science (Separate Sciences)

- Students take **three separate IGCSEs**: Biology, Chemistry, and Physics.
- This pathway covers greater depth and breadth of scientific content.
- Students receive **three distinct grades** (e.g., Biology = 7, Chemistry = 8, Physics = 6).
- Particularly recommended for pupils who are considering science-related A Levels or university pathways.

Key Difference:

- Combined Science = 2 grades for a broad science education.
 - Triple Science = 3 grades with more detailed subject coverage.
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7. Examination and Assessment Details

- Examinations usually take place in **May/June** (linear exams) and **January** (Modular exams) sessions.
- Assessment is **100% external examinations** for most subjects.
- Some subjects include a **coursework or practical component** (e.g., Art & Design, PE).

8. IGCSE Assessment Schedule

This table outlines the typical assessment schedule for IGCSEs in Capital School. It includes the year each exam is usually taken, the module/unit name, assessment time, and example topics assessed.

KS4 Subjects – Year 10 Aug 2025

International GCSE Subjects: We use the Edexcel exam board for all of our subjects

Subject	Subject Code	Examination Code	Linear / Modular	Specifications
English Literature	4XET1	Unit 1 (June2026): 4WET1 01 Unit 2 (June 2027): 4WET2 01	Modular	English Lit Specification
English Language	4XEA1	Unit 1 (June2026): 4WEA1 01 Unit 2 (June 2027): 4WEA2 01	Modular	English Language Specification
Mathematics (Foundation)	4XMAF	Unit 1 (June2026): 4WM1F 01 Unit 2 (June 2027): 4WM2F 01	Modular	Maths Foundation Specification
Mathematics (Higher)	4XMAH	Unit 1 (June2026): 4WM1H 01 Unit 2 (June 2027): 4WM2H 01	Modular	Maths Higher Specification
Science (Double Award)	4XSD1	Biology: Unit 1 (June2026): 4WSD1 1B Unit 2 (June 2027): 4WSD2 1B Chemistry: Unit 3 (June2026): 4WSD3 1C Unit 4 (June 2027): 4WSD4 1C Physics:	Modular	Combined Science Specification



		Unit 5 (June2026): 4WSD5 1P Unit 6 (June 2027): 4WSD6 1P		
Biology	4XBI1	Unit 1 (June2026): 4WBI1 1B Unit 2 (June 2027): 4WBI2 1B	Modular	Biology Specification
Chemistry	4XCH1	Unit 1 (June2026): 4WCH1 1C Unit 2 (June 2027): 4WCH2 1C	Modular	Chemistry Specification
Physics	4XPH1	Unit 1 (June2026): 4WPH1 1P Unit 2 (June 2027): 4WPH2 1P	Modular	Physics Specification
Geography	4GE1	Paper 1 (June 2026): 4GE1 01 Paper 2 (June 2026): 4GE1 02	Linear	Geography Specification
History	4HI1	Paper 1 (June 2026): 4HI1 01 Paper 2 (June 2026): 4HI1 02	Linear	History Specification
Arabic	4AA1	Paper 1 (June 2026): 4AA1 01 Paper 2 (June 2026): 4AA1 02	Linear	Arabic Specification
Business Studies	4BS1	Paper 1 (June 2026): 4BS1 01 Paper 2 (June 2026): 4BS1 02	Linear	Business Studies Specification
Economics	4EC1	Paper 1 (June 2026): 4EC1 01 Paper 2 (June 2026): 4EC1 02	Linear	Economics Specification
Information and Communication Technology (ICT)	4IT1	Written Paper 1 (June 2026): 4IT1 01 Practical Paper 2 (June 2026): 4IT1 02	Linear	ICT Specification
Computer Science	4CPO		Linear	Computer Science

BTEC Subjects:

Subject Title	Units	Specifications
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Pearson BTEC Level 1/Level 2 First Award in Sports	Unit 1 - Principles of fitness and fitness testing Unit 2 - Training for personal fitness Unit 5 - Practical Sport	BTEC Sport Specification
Pearson BTEC Level 1/Level 2 First Award in Travel and Tourism	Unit 1 - The Travel and Tourism Industry Unit 2 - Customer Service in Travel and Tourism Organisations Unit 5 - Travel Planning	Travel & Tourism Specification

9. Parent Guide to BTEC Level 2 Qualifications

This guide provides parents with a clear understanding of BTEC Level 2 qualifications in Travel and Tourism and Business (these are the two we are currently running but there are 25 BTEC course options in total). It explains what BTECs are, how they are assessed, how they compare to IGCSEs, and how they are viewed by international universities.

What Are BTEC Level 2 Qualifications?

BTEC Level 2 qualifications are vocational courses designed for students aged 14 and above. They focus on practical learning and real-world skills, making them ideal for students who prefer coursework and applied learning over traditional exams. All pupils are doing the BTEC Level 2 Award Qualification, which is equivalent to a single iGCSE

Travel and Tourism includes:

- - Types of tourism (domestic, inbound, outbound)
- - Customer service and travel planning
- - Sustainable tourism and global destinations

Business includes:

- - Marketing and finance
- - Business operations and entrepreneurship
- - Customer service and communication

How Are BTECs Assessed?

BTECs are assessed through a mix of internal and external assessments:

- - Internal assessments: Coursework, projects, presentations, and practical tasks marked by teachers.
- - External assessments: Set tasks or exams marked by Pearson.



Each unit is graded as:

- - Pass (P)
- - Merit (M)
- - Distinction (D)
- - Distinction* (D*)

Final grades are calculated by converting unit grades into points and combining them.

How Do BTECs Compare to IGCSEs?

BTEC Level 2 qualifications are equivalent in difficulty to IGCSEs, but differ in style:

BTEC Grade to IGCSE Equivalent:

- - Distinction* (D*): Grade 8.5
- - Distinction (D): Grade 7
- - Merit (M): Grade 5.5
- - Pass (P): Grade 4

BTECs are ideal for students who thrive in continuous assessment and practical learning, while IGCSEs are more exam-focused.

International Recognition

BTEC qualifications are widely recognised by universities and employers across the globe:

- - Accepted in over 80 countries
- - Recognised by universities in the UK, US, Canada, Australia, UAE, and more
- - Many institutions accept BTEC Level 3 for undergraduate entry, and Level 2 for progression to Level 3
- - Some universities offer advanced standing or credit exemptions for BTEC students

Why Choose BTEC?

- - Practical and career-focused
- - Flexible assessment (less pressure from final exams)
- - Builds confidence through real-world tasks
- - Supports progression to further education or employment
- - Recognised internationally for its quality and relevance



10. Supporting Your Child

Parents play a vital role in IGCSE success. You can help by: - Encouraging regular study habits. - Monitoring homework and revision. - Providing a quiet study environment. - Attending school information sessions. - Communicating with teachers about progress.

11. Revision and Exam Preparation Guide

General Study Tips

- **Create a study timetable:** Help your child plan revision across all subjects well in advance.
- **Break study into chunks:** Short, focused sessions (30–40 minutes) are more effective than long hours.
- **Use active recall:** Encourage your child to test themselves regularly rather than just re-reading notes.
- **Past papers:** Practising with Pearson Edexcel past papers helps students understand question styles and time management.

Subject-Specific Strategies

- **English:** Practise essay planning, reading unseen texts, and timed writing tasks.
- **Maths:** Work on problem-solving, practise different types of questions, and review errors to avoid repetition.
- **Science:** Revise key definitions, practise drawing diagrams, and use flashcards for formulas.

Healthy Habits

- Ensure adequate **sleep, exercise, and balanced nutrition**.
- Encourage regular **breaks** to avoid burnout.
- Maintain a positive mindset and manage stress through relaxation techniques.

How Parents Can Support

- Check in regularly on progress without adding pressure.
 - Celebrate small achievements to build confidence.
 - Ensure your child has access to quiet study areas and necessary resources.
 - Encourage attendance at any **revision sessions** offered by the school.
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12. Frequently Asked Questions

Q: How many subjects will my child take?

A: Typically, between 7–10 subjects, depending on ability and future aspirations.

Q: Can my child retake exams?

A: Yes, Pearson Edexcel offers retake opportunities in all subjects.

Q: Will universities accept these IGCSEs?

A: Yes, Pearson Edexcel IGCSEs are globally recognised and valued by universities.

13. Parent Guide to A-Levels

Supporting Your Child Through Their Post-16 Education Journey

What Are A-Levels?

From August 2026 capital School will be offering A-Levels alongside its existing BTEC qualifications. A-Levels (Advanced Level qualifications) are subject-based qualifications typically taken by students aged 16–18. They are widely recognized by universities and employers around the world and are a common pathway to higher education.

Students usually study **three to four subjects** over two years, culminating in exams at the end of Year 13.

Why Choose A-Levels?

- **Flexibility:** Students choose subjects that align with their strengths, interests, and future goals.
 - **Depth of Study:** A-Levels allow for in-depth exploration of subjects.
 - **Global Recognition:** Accepted by universities in the UK, US, Canada, Europe, and beyond.
 - **Specialization:** Ideal for students who already have a clear idea of their career path.
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Structure of A-Level Courses

- **Year 12 (AS Level):** Foundation year; some schools offer AS exams.
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- **Year 13 (A2 Level):** Builds on Year 12 content; final exams determine the full A-Level grade.
 - **Assessment:** Mostly exam-based, though some subjects include coursework or practicals.
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14. University Applications

Most students apply through **UCAS (UK)**, but international schools also support applications to:

- **US universities** (via Common App)
- **Canadian institutions**
- **European universities**
- **Gulf region universities**

Applications typically begin in **Year 13**, but preparation starts in **Year 12**.

15. Key Dates to Remember

- **Subject selection:** End of Year 11
 - **Mock exams:** Year 12 and Year 13
 - **University application deadlines:** October–January of Year 13 (depending on country)
 - **Final exams:** May–June of Year 13
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16. FAQs

Q: Can my child change subjects after starting A-Levels?

A: Yes, but ideally within the first few weeks of Year 12.

Q: Are A-Levels harder than IGCSEs?

A: Yes, they are more challenging and require greater independence, but students are supported throughout.

Q: What if my child doesn't know what to study at university?

A: Choose a broad range of subjects and consult the school's university guidance counselor.



At our school, we are deeply committed to ensuring that every student is guided along the most appropriate and fulfilling pathway through Key Stage 4 and Key Stage 5. Our dedicated team works closely with students, families, and staff to provide tailored support that maximizes each learner's potential. Whether their aspirations lie in further education, vocational training, or professional careers, we strive to equip them with the skills, knowledge, and confidence they need to pursue their goals successfully. Parents can be assured that their child's future is at the heart of everything we do.

17. Parent Guide to Level 3 BTECs

Understanding Vocational Pathways in an International School Context

What are Level 3 BTECs?

Level 3 BTECs (Business and Technology Education Council qualifications) are **career-focused, vocational qualifications** designed to provide practical, real-world skills alongside academic knowledge. They are typically taken by students aged 16–19 and are equivalent to A-Levels.

BTECs are offered in a wide range of subjects such as:

- Business
- Health & Social Care
- Engineering
- IT
- Performing Arts
- Sport

They are assessed mainly through **coursework, projects, and practical tasks**, with some units including external exams.

How Do BTECs Compare to A-Levels?

Feature	BTEC Level 3 National Extended Diploma	A-Level
Duration	2 years	2 years
Focus	Vocational/practical	Academic/theoretical
Assessment	Coursework + some exams	Mostly exams
University Points	Up to 168 UCAS points (same as 3 A-Levels)	Up to 168 UCAS points



Feature	BTEC Level 3 National Extended Diploma	A-Level
Learning Style	Applied, hands-on	Analytical, exam-based

BTECs can be taken as:

- **Extended Diploma** (equivalent to 3 A-Levels)
- **Diploma** (equivalent to 2 A-Levels)
- **Extended Certificate** (equivalent to 1 A-Level)

University Recognition

International Universities

- **Recognition varies** by country and institution.
- Many universities in **Europe, the Middle East, Australia, Canada, and the US** accept BTECs, especially for vocational or applied degree programs.
- Students may need to provide **transcripts, course details, and grading breakdowns**.
- Some institutions may prefer BTECs to be **combined with A-Levels** for broader academic preparation.

GB UK Universities

- **Widely accepted** across UK universities, including many **Russell Group** institutions.
- Some competitive courses (e.g., medicine, law) may prefer or require A-Levels.
- Universities may ask for **specific BTEC subjects** or combinations with A-Levels.

Ideal for Students Who:

- Prefer **practical learning** over traditional exams.
 - Have a clear interest in a **specific career path**.
 - Thrive in **project-based environments**.
 - Want to progress to **university, apprenticeships, or employment**.
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18. Contact Information

For more details, please contact the **Secondary Office at Capital School Bahrain** or speak directly to your child's subject teachers.

Email: reception@capitalschoolbahrain.com

Phone: (+973) 1700 8880

Website: www.capitalschoolbahrain.com

Together, we can ensure your child's success at IGCSE and beyond.