



Prince of Wales Island
International School

IGCSE Options

Subject Information

Booklet.

For IGCSE Students Sept 2021 - July 2023

MTT Learning Academy Sdn Bhd (733077-D)

1 Jalan Sungai Air Putih 6, Bandar Baru Air Putih, 11000 Balik Pulau, Penang,
Malaysia

Tel +604-868 9999 • Fax +604-868 9900 ● www.powiis.edu.my





Dear Parents/Guardians,

The transition from Year 9 to 10 is an important step in students' academic careers as it represents the first time that they are able to make a significant choice about which subjects they wish to study.

At POWIIS the Year 10 and 11 curriculum offers breadth and depth and is primarily based on the International General Certificate of Secondary Education (IGCSE). The IGCSE is an international version of the compulsory school examinations in England and Wales but is more suited to students in international schools as it allows us to use case studies and texts which are more appropriate to this region. The IGCSE is the most popular examination worldwide for 14-16 year olds and is seen as excellent preparation for A Level and other post 16 qualifications. IGCSE courses do follow a prescribed curriculum administered by examination boards in England. At POWIIS we use two examination boards to administer our examinations: Cambridge Assessment International Examinations (CAIE) and Edexcel (formerly the University of London Examinations Board). However we structure our courses around learning rather than assessment and the learning is not always confined to the limits of the syllabus content.

Each IGCSE course lasts two years and is externally assessed by written examinations. Some courses include coursework which will be completed in school and internally assessed but then externally moderated. IGCSE courses start in September of Year 10 and the examinations are usually sat in May and June of Year 11. CAIE IGCSE grades are reported on a scale from A* to U, with grades A* to C considered to be a good pass. Edexcel IGCSE courses will receive a 1 (low) to 9 (high) award, with 4 and above considered a good pass.

In addition to the more formal academic curriculum students at POWIIS will follow a Personal Social and Health Education (PSHE) course. PSHE provides year 10 and 11 students with the opportunity to reflect on and apply their academic knowledge. It covers a broad range of subjects, focusing on students' wellbeing and aims to help them become young adults who are prepared to make their own moral judgments. Among other things, it looks at how to live a healthy lifestyle, bullying, mental health, as well as relationship education. Students will also continue to have timetabled (non-examined) Physical Education lessons and will be able to choose from a wide range of extra-curricular activities through the after school activities programme.

All students at POWIIS will study Mathematics, English Language and at least one Science. We also expect all students to study a language and due to local Ministry of Education requirements, for Malaysian citizens, this must be Bahasa Melayu, either alone or combined. For the combined course students will study BM for 1 lesson a fortnight and Mandarin Chinese for the rest of the lessons. They will then sit their BM IGCSE at the end of year 10. Students who choose this pathway must have the approval of our Mandarin and BM department heads before they will be accepted on the course. Students who are identified as needing additional English lessons will have ESL as part of their full timetable and therefore they will choose one fewer subject.

After maths and English students can make 6 choices. The table on the next page shows the subjects offered and the attached booklet gives more details about the courses along with links to the specifications. Depending on their final choices students will take exams in between 7 and 11 subjects.



Students must choose **six** subjects from the following options:

Science Students must choose at least one	Languages Students must choose at least one	Other Subjects Students choose up to 4
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Biology ➤ Chemistry ➤ Physics 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Bahasa Melayu ➤ French ➤ Mandarin Chinese ➤ Spanish 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Art ➤ Business or Economics* ➤ Computer Science or ICT* ➤ Design Technology ➤ Drama ➤ Geography ➤ History ➤ Music** ➤ Physical Education (examined) ➤ Psychology

* Students are not permitted to choose both Business Studies and Economics, or ICT and Computer Science.

** Music: It is advisable that students have basic musical knowledge, including notation.

All students are expected to maintain a full timetable with a broad range of subjects. Therefore, except in very exceptional circumstances, we do not allow students to 'drop' subjects during Year 10 or 11. Changes to subject choices are allowed during the first half term of Year 10 but only after consultation with parents and approval from teachers.

Other IGCSE Examinations

Selected students will also have the opportunity to take Further Mathematics and English Literature. These are not option choices but are taught within the normal Maths and English lessons. We expect all students in the top two sets of English to also study English Literature. Further Mathematics is only an option for our most able Mathematicians. Students will have to sit an additional examination to take this course and should indicate on their options form that they wish to do this.

The IGCSE subject information booklet has more information about individual courses as well as links to the online syllabus documents. Please read through this information with your child so that they can make an informed decision on what subjects to study. Every effort will be made to accommodate all students' first choices. However, if this is not possible in individual cases, students may be asked to make an alternative choice.

Thank you for your continued support and if you have any further questions please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours faithfully

Mrs Clarke
Deputy Principal (Curriculum)
dp.curriculum@powiis.edu.my



Core Subjects.

All students will sit English Language (either first or second), Mathematics and at least one Science. There is the option to sit all three Sciences if a student wishes.

English First Language [CIE 0500](#)

English First Language is tailored towards those fluent in English and those who use English to communicate in their everyday lives. This course will help students to improve their written and spoken communication whilst exposing them to a wide-range of fiction and non-fiction texts. They will develop close reading skills and will engage with writers' thoughts, feelings and viewpoint, as well as developing personal responses to ideas in a text. Students will not only learn how to use a wide range of vocabulary, correct grammar, spelling and punctuation, but will also enjoy plentiful opportunities for creative writing.

English as a Second Language [CIE 0510](#)

This course is designed for students who are in the earlier stages of English language acquisition. The course offers learners the opportunity to improve their communicative ability in English; it will enable them to understand English in a range of everyday situations and social circumstances; and improve their ability to understand how the English Language works. Students who take this route are often encouraged to take additional English support lessons.

Mathematics EDEXCEL [4MA1](#)

An essential subject for all learners, Edexcel IGCSE Mathematics encourages the development of mathematical knowledge as a key life skill, and as a basis for more advanced study. The syllabus aims to build learners' confidence by helping them develop a feel for numbers, patterns and relationships, and places a strong emphasis on solving problems and presenting and interpreting results. Learners also gain an understanding of how to communicate and reason using mathematical concepts. IGCSE students will be taught Mathematics for 6 periods per fortnight with two exams in May of year 11.

Biology [EDEXCEL 4BI1](#)

The IGCSE Biology course involves a mixture of learning key biological facts and concepts, with developing practical skills relevant to the subject. The course focuses on the unifying themes within Biology and allows students to develop a cross-curricular approach to Science as well. Topics studied include cells, classification, human body systems, ecology and the impact of humans on the environment. Throughout the course, students complete practical work including dissections and learn methods for accurate data collection.

Chemistry [EDEXCEL 4CH1](#)

Chemistry is the study of atoms, the building blocks of all materials. The world of chemistry serves two very important roles, making useful materials and testing materials. Chemistry is a very practical subject and our aim in POWIIS is to make the study of chemistry come alive through colourful and thought-provoking experiments. The syllabus for Edexcel divides our study into 5 main topics which are described in detail on the syllabus. All students will develop practical and investigative skills during the course as well as acquire knowledge of the facts, concepts and principles of chemistry. In an age of rapid change and development we aim to equip our students for the World of the future as well as prepare them for further studies in this subject.



Physics [EDEXCEL 4PH1](#)

Physics IGCSE is a 2 year course in which students study physical processes such as Forces, Motion, Energy, Electromagnetism and Radioactivity. Their final grade will come from their performance in external examinations at the end of Year 11. Physics is a practical subject and students are expected to develop their practical skill during the course and use this to deepen their understanding of the subject. A good IGCSE grade in Physics gives students a thorough grounding in the subject to prepare them for further study.

Special Subjects.

These are not option choices but are available in certain circumstances if the students fit the criteria.

English Literature [CIE 0475](#)

For English sets 10X1 and 10Y1

Students who are in sets 1 and 2 in year 9 will study an additional IGCSE in English. Students who take this route will be exposed to a range of texts, including Poetry, Drama and Prose, from the works of Shakespeare to contemporary literature. An English Literature student should enjoy reading and be prepared to uncover the deeper meanings and significance within a text. He/she will be prepared to take risks and share their personal interpretations, remembering that there is not always a right or wrong answer!

An IGCSE in Literature will stimulate learners to read for pleasure, to explore wider and universal issues, thus promoting a better understanding of themselves and the world.

Further Pure Mathematics [EDEXCEL 4PM1](#)

For selected students only

Some students will study Further Pure Mathematics IGCSE in addition to Mathematics IGCSE. This does not count as an option subject as it is studied without any extra lesson time. It is a very challenging course which should only be undertaken if students are naturally gifted, genuinely interested and determined to succeed. Studying this course will help prepare students for AS and A Level Further Mathematics but it is not a requirement for any other course or future career. IGCSE Mathematics will be taught and examined in Year 10. Only students who achieve a Grade 7/8/9 will continue on to study IGCSE Further Pure Mathematics in Year 11. If students are interested they should speak to their Maths teacher who will discuss their suitability and there will be an entrance assessment at the end of year 9.



Languages

Students should choose at least one language subject. Where there are different levels of qualification these will be decided by the relevant teachers. It is possible for some students to combine Bahasa Melayu (BM) and Mandarin, taking BM at the end of year 10 and Mandarin in year 11. Any student interested in this option should speak to their language teacher. All Malaysian citizens are required, by law, to study BM.

Bahasa Melayu CIE

[Foreign Language 0546](#)

[First Language 0696](#)

Studying Bahasa Malaysia is of great importance for those living in Malaysia. Bahasa Melayu, as it is also called, is a major language of the Austronesian family. It is the national language of Malaysia, Indonesia, and Brunei, and one of four official languages of Singapore. It is spoken natively by 40 million people in South East Asia. The practical value of learning the language of one's country of residence is immense, and students are encouraged to do so across the world. The Foreign Language Malay (0546) option for IGCSE aims to develop students' ability to use the language effectively for purposes of practical communication. The syllabus also aims to offer insights into the culture and civilisation of countries where the language is spoken, thus encouraging positive attitudes towards language learning and towards speakers of foreign languages. The First Language Malay syllabus (0696) recommends that learners starting this course should have studied a Malay language curriculum such as the Cambridge Lower Secondary programme or equivalent national educational framework. Learners are also encouraged to read widely, both for their own enjoyment and to develop an appreciation of how writers achieve their effects.

Mandarin Chinese CIE

[First Language 0509](#)

[Second Language 0523](#)

[Foreign Language 0547](#)

One fifth of the planet speaks Chinese. Mandarin Chinese is the mother tongue of over 873 million people, making it the most widely spoken first language in the world. In addition to the People's Republic of China, Mandarin Chinese is also spoken in the important and influential Chinese communities of Indonesia, Thailand, Malaysia, Singapore, Brunei, the Philippines, and beyond. With increasing demand for people with the talent of speaking Chinese, more and more are now beginning to learn Chinese. There are three possibilities for students wishing to study Chinese; Chinese as a First Language (0509), Chinese as a Second Language (0523) and Chinese as a Foreign Language (0547). All three courses are not oriented towards total beginners.

Spanish [CIE 0530](#)

Cambridge IGCSE Spanish develops a set of transferable skills for understanding and communicating in everyday situations in Spanish. Learners begin to develop cultural awareness of countries and communities where Spanish is spoken. They acquire the essential linguistic skills required for progression to further studies or employment. Our approach in Cambridge IGCSE Spanish encourages learners to be: Confident, using new and familiar structures and vocabulary to communicate with others in everyday situations. Responsible, seeking opportunities to use and develop their language skills. Reflective, considering how to communicate different ideas and attitudes. Innovative, applying language to a variety of situations. Engaged, developing learning strategies which help them to express their ideas and their understanding of other cultures.



French [CIE 0520](#)

French is second only to English for the number of countries where it has official status and is a working language of international organisations such as the UN and the EU. France is in the top-five countries for studying abroad and its language, culture and literature have influenced today's western culture significantly. The French language option for IGCSE offers the possibility for students to reach an intermediate level in French. The main focus is the ability to communicate in the French language in everyday life situations. Students will be able to understand standard written and spoken texts and they will learn to interact as well as produce texts of their own on familiar topics that are evolving around the students' life like school, home, family, community life, travel, leisure and culture. The course is not oriented towards total beginners and students should have knowledge of the 3 basic tenses (present, immediate future and perfect tense) when joining.

Option Subjects.

Students can choose up to 4 additional subjects, depending on their science option. Students who study GCSEs in the UK are expected to take either Geography or History but it is not compulsory for international examinations.

History [CIE 0470](#)

Students who study IGCSE History have a fantastic opportunity, to undertake a course that allows them to understand how the 21st century has been shaped by the events of the 20th century. This course will not only increase their knowledge of key events, some events their own relatives lived through, but will also allow them, with hindsight, to question the decisions made by the leaders of the time. They will evaluate primary evidence, make judgments on the decisions of key leaders of the day, as well as debate what decisions could have been made. At the end of the course students are able to assess whether History repeats itself, and whether 'Man' does learn from his mistakes. Students are also more aware of world events today, and can thus, play a role in shaping the world they live in. Students who study History can also enjoy careers in Law, Journalism, Archeology, Research, to name but a few.

Geography [CIE 0460](#)

Geography occupies a central position in understanding and interpreting issues affecting people, places and environments. Through the study of IGCSE geography students will develop knowledge and understanding of different views and attitudes towards the world, its environments and its issues. The course is fun, varied and will provide students with the opportunity to take learning outside of the classroom on adventurous fieldwork assignments. Students will also develop data analysis skills, and will be exposed to the visual stimuli of photographs, maps, graphs and Geographical Information Systems. The Syllabus will help develop a student's awareness of global issues and recognise the need for a sustainable future.

Art and Design [Edexcel 4FA1](#)

The course aims to give students the experience of expressive and experimental work; observational drawing; experimentation and problem solving; graphic communication and presentation skills, all within an art historical and contextual framework. It is structured to give all students the opportunity to make a creative and personal journey over two years in which they will develop skills, techniques and ideas through the exploration of the formal elements in art and design. We hope to be able to offer up to three different disciplines: Fine Art, Photography or Textiles. The course is designed for those who have a commitment to and love of the subject and feel motivated to develop their skills and express their ideas in working through thematic projects and assignments. Assessment is through a practical portfolio (60%) and a 10 hour practical examination (40%).



Drama [CIE 0411](#)

The Cambridge IGCSE course in Drama aims to develop students' understanding of Drama through practical and theoretical study; to enable students to realise the performance possibilities of text and other stimuli; to encourage the use of dramatic forms and structures; and to communicate feelings and ideas to an audience. Assessment is based on 60% practical work which is moderated by Cambridge and 40% theory in the form of an external written examination of two hours. Drama also provides other important life and transferable skills which can be used in other fields of study.

Music [CIE 0410](#)

Cambridge IGCSE Music offers students the opportunity to develop their own practical musical skills through performing and composing. They also develop their listening skills by studying music from the main historical periods and styles of Western music as well as selected non-Western traditions. The emphasis within this syllabus is as much on developing lifelong musical skills as on acquiring knowledge. Besides this, IGCSE Music gives the opportunity to listen to and learn about music from a wide range of historical periods and major world cultures; to develop skills in performing music, both individually and in a group with other musicians; and to develop skills in composing music in a style of the student's choice. Apart from music appreciation, there are many other crucial skills that can be developed from studying music such as self-confidence, problem-solving, conceptualizing, logical reasoning, communication and making value judgements.

Design and Technology [CIE 0445](#)

The IGCSE Design and Technology course enables students to develop and apply knowledge and skills that are different from many of their other subjects. The design portfolio they create has a strong academic content and requires considerable time and commitment. The course develops creativity, practical skills and specialist language use as well as building independent and project-based skills needed for most professional career paths. Students gain greater technical and design awareness, while developing skills such as initiative, resourcefulness, enquiry and ingenuity. They also develop the communication skills central to design making and evaluation. IGCSE Design and Technology provides an ideal basis for further study and prepares students for their future within a rapidly changing technological society. The qualification is ideal for students considering careers in engineering, architecture, product design, graphics, medical technology and research and development.

Business Studies [CIE 0450](#)

The Cambridge IGCSE Business Studies syllabus develops learners' understanding of business activity in the public and private sectors, and the importance of innovation and change. Learners find out how the major types of business organisation are established, financed and run, and how their activities are regulated. Factors influencing business decision-making are also considered, as are the essential values of cooperation and interdependence.

Economics [CIE 0455](#)

The Cambridge IGCSE Economics syllabus develops an understanding of economic terminology and principles and of basic economic theory. Learners study the economics of developed and developing nations and how these interrelate. They also learn to handle simple data and undertake economic analysis, evaluate information and discriminate between facts and value judgements in economic issues.



Computer Science [CIE 0478](#)

Learners studying the Cambridge IGCSE Computer Science syllabus develop their understanding of the main principles of problem solving using computers. They apply their understanding to develop computer-based solutions to problems using algorithms and a high-level programming language. Learners also develop a range of technical skills, as well as being able to effectively test and evaluate computing solutions. Studying Cambridge IGCSE Computer Science will help learners appreciate current and emerging computing technologies, the benefits of their use and recognise their potential risks. Students will also develop a detailed understanding of the component parts of computer systems and how they interrelate, including software, data, hardware, communications and people.

ICT [CIE 0417](#)

The Information Communication Technology syllabus encourages learners to develop lifelong skills, which will be useful to them in their work across the curriculum and prepare them for future employment. They will develop an understanding of the implications of technology in society, including social, economic and ethical uses and awareness of the ways ICT can help in home, learning and work environments. The syllabus combines theoretical and practical studies focusing on the ability to use common software applications to solve problems, including word processors, spreadsheets, databases, interactive presentation software, web browsers and website design. Learners analyse, design, implement, test and evaluate ICT systems, ensuring that they are fit for purpose.

Physical Education [CIE 0413](#)

The IGCSE in Physical Education is a theoretical and practical course, split 50/50, studying anatomy, physiology and psychological aspects of the human body and relating it to sporting situations. The subject also covers sociological and historical issues linked to health and physical activity around the world. It is a diverse subject which provides students the opportunity to demonstrate they are able to apply knowledge and analytical skills to areas outside of the core subjects. It is important for this course that students are prepared and committed to achieve a school team standard in four different sports. This qualification is a subject that combines well with the scientific subjects, in particular, and is valuable in the pursuit of many different educational pathways and careers.

Psychology [Edexcel 1PSO](#)

Psychology allows you the chance to study the interconnection between mind and behaviour. In our first year we will study development, memory, neuroscience, psychological problems and social influence through historical studies and theories which are as relevant now as they have ever been. We will tackle issues and debates such as reductionism and determinism, whilst all the time considering how research methodology must be planned with care to ensure the results are valid, reliable and ethical. During our second year, we take a journey into the world of criminal psychology along with theories regarding sleep and what our dreams mean. Psychology lessons are upbeat and thought provoking and will suit an individual with strength in written communication, biological processes and, most importantly, a genuine interest in what makes us human.