



International School of Madrid

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24/07/11

Information to parents of secondary pupils: Academic Studies (2011-2012)

ISM, then known as IPS, was founded in 1971. The **secondary section** was created in September 1996, and moved to the present site in Serrano Galvache in September 2000.

With its emphasis on meeting the needs of the whole person and on the quality and effectiveness of the learning process, the secondary section aims to prepare its students to be as well equipped as possible to face the challenges of a changing world.

The Curriculum at I.S.M. has been specially designed to meet the needs of both Spanish and non-Spanish students in Madrid. Whilst it is based on the **English National Curriculum**, and the academic examinations which are recognised for entry into universities in Britain, the curriculum permits Spanish students to follow these studies whilst at the same time satisfying the curriculum requirements of the Spanish government for the education of Spanish students in non-Spanish schools.

The information below seeks to explain the main characteristics of the teaching system in I.S.M. which follows the **English National Curriculum**. This is done through a description of the examination courses taken at the school, which is an official examination centre for Cambridge International Examinations, part of Cambridge Assessment (formerly U.C.L.E.S. - The University of Cambridge Local Examinations Syndicate), and EDEXCEL (formerly The University of London Examinations Board).

I. Studies that are offered by the International School of Madrid

General

Students in the International School of Madrid study a teaching programme which is specifically designed to suit their needs. Whilst all students study a range of subjects which are based on the British **National Curriculum** programme and which prepare them for entry into British universities, Spanish students also study the **Spanish subjects** required by the Spanish Ministry, thus validating their studies and ensuring an excellent preparation for entry into Spanish universities, having in addition the very high level of English obtained in I.S.M.

In Years 7 to 11 students are set in some subjects according to their level, for instance in French and Mathematics in Key Stage Three (French Years 7-9; Maths, Year 9). As both sets are timetabled at the same time pupils can be moved between groups in order to match their needs better.

For more information about KS3 subjects, all compulsory, please refer to the booklet given to parents in October. Some pupils may be doing Drama instead of sports on Fridays if they are taking part in the Musical, which takes place in March in a local theatre.

The information below focuses on studies in Key Stage Four (Years 10 and 11), where IGCSEs are studied over two years and examined at the end of Year 11, and Key stage 5 (Years 12 and 13), where students study Advanced Level subjects (mainly AS in Y12 and A2 in Year 13. Exceptions are Spanish A level, taken in Year 12).

Details on studies and examinations in the International School of Madrid.

There are five types of external examinations taken in I.S.M.

- A) The **IGCSE** examinations, taken mainly in Year 11. English as a **First** Language and Spanish as a First Language is normally taken in Year 10. In some cases Foreign Language French is taken in Year 10.
- B) The **GCE Advanced Level and Advanced Subsidiary Level (AS)** examinations, which are taken in Years 12 and 13.
- C) The **K.E.T.** (in Primary), **P.E.T.**, **F.C.E.** (First Certificate), **C.A.E.** (Advanced) and **C.P.E.** (Proficiency) examinations of Cambridge ESOL (English as a Second Language examinations).
- D) In addition students take the French **Alliance Française** examinations (Prepa., CAF, DELF, etc).

These externally assessed exams are billed separately.

The **End of Key Stage Tests** (SATs), taken in Year 9, are marked internally. Some **Progress Tests** may be taken in Year 7 for pupils not reaching the required level in Year 6.

The information below gives you more details about some of these examinations.

A) IGCSE EXAMINATIONS.

To understand what IGCSE is we need to explain first what GCSE means.

i) What are G.C.S.E.s?

G.C.S.E. means 'General Certificate of Secondary Education'. These are examinations which all pupils in the United Kingdom (except Scotland) have to take at the end of their compulsory period of education, usually at 16 year of age. They consist of a programme of studies in a number of compulsory and optional subjects taken over **two** years, in Years 10 and 11. Within the Spanish educational system this corresponds to 3^o and 4^o of ESO.

ii) What are IGCSEs?

The IGCSE is the international version of the GCSE. The IGCSEs taken through Cambridge International Examinations (CIE) are recognised world wide as an appropriate qualification to be taken by pupils of this age. The main difference between the GCSEs and the IGCSEs is that in some areas they have been restructured to give a more international flavour to the courses.

iii) The significance of the IGCSE qualification

The marking system is as follows: Grades A,B,C,D,E,F,G are given, a grade **C** being regarded as a pass mark. Most institutions of higher education in the UK demand 5 IGCSE passes with a minimum of a C grade.

iv) An examination for pupils of all abilities

The IGCSE is designed to examine pupils of all abilities. Within some subjects, including Maths, Science and Economics, there are two optional levels: **Core** and **Extended**. Extended is designed for those pupils who are capable of achieving an A or a B grade.

Although all the pupils of the International School of Madrid have the opportunity of studying both levels, there will be some pupils to whom it could be recommended **not** to take the Extended level in certain subjects as they are more likely guaranteed a pass at C grade by taking

the Core level. This decision would be taken in Year 11 (the second year of IGCSE studies).

v) Evaluation of Coursework

One of the most important characteristics of the IGCSE exams is that in some subjects some of the work that the students complete during the course counts towards the final exam mark. The evaluation of coursework varies from 20 - 40% of the final grade. Examples are Art and Design, Computer Studies and First Language English.

vi) Subjects in Years 10 and 11

Students follow a two-year course in *compulsory* and *optional* subjects, being examined at the end of Year 11. In many cases they will have already taken and passed two IGCSEs in Year 10, English as a First (or Second Language, if their English is weak) and Spanish as a First Language (or Spanish as a Foreign Language, if their Spanish is weak) before they commence Year 11 studies. Some pupils at ISM take French as a Foreign Language early too.

There are a minimum of **five** compulsory IGCSE subjects for all the pupils, and a number of optional subjects (**three**). In addition to IGCSE courses, all Spanish students study **Spanish subjects** required by the Spanish Ministry. In Years 10 and 11, which is equivalent to 3º and 4º E.S.O., the subjects are '**Lengua y Literatura Española** and **Sociedad (Historia)**'.

vi a) Compulsory Subjects

English as a First Language (Year 10), English Literature (Year 11), Mathematics, Co-ordinated Science (a Double Award IGCSE in Biology, Chemistry and Physics), **First Language Spanish (Year 10)** and **IGCSE Spanish Literature (Year 11)** are compulsory subjects for most students.

- This means that most pupils are prepared for a maximum total of **7** IGCSE certificates (Sciences is double award). This does not include the three optional subjects outlined in section **vi b)** below.

Lengua y Literatura Española and **Sociedad (Historia)**, not IGCSE courses, are also compulsory for the Spanish pupils.

vi b) Optional subjects

The **International School of Madrid** offers a number of suitable IGCSEs which can give the pupils in each case the chance to study subjects useful to them and to achieve the top grade, thus ensuring the validation with the Spanish system.

Students normally choose 3 subjects from the following:

- **History or Computer Studies; Geography or French; Art and Design or Economics.**

If teaching staff consider it appropriate, pupils can also be prepared for other subjects, taken in the November or June examination sessions, such as **First Language French**. Other Foreign Languages (German, Chinese, Portuguese, Italian, Arabic) can also be examined, although tuition for these is arranged privately. Mr. Salmon arranges these language examinations.

vi c) Other classes (not IGCSE exams)

Physical education; Sports or Drama; Religion or Citizenship (or **Psicología** in Year 13, this subject in Spanish).

B) ADVANCED LEVEL EXAMINATIONS (AS and A2) AND SPANISH STUDIES IN YEARS 12 AND 13

i) General

Students are prepared for the **Advanced** Level and the **Advanced Subsidiary** examinations (**AS**) of the University of Cambridge and Edexcel examination board. A and AS Levels are studied in the last two years of school - Years 12 and 13, equivalent to the Spanish 1st and 2nd Bachillerato.

The **Advanced** levels consist of a vigorous programme of study and are recognised world wide as an excellent means of entry to a university. Most of the **AS** courses are studied in Year 12 and each course is the first part of the full A level. The second part, called A2, is normally studied in Year 13. Many students finish with four or five full A levels, one being Spanish Advanced level, normally taken in Y12). Most British universities require the equivalent of **three** good Advanced Level passes for entry (not including Spanish in the case of Spanish pupils).

ii) Subjects that are on offer in Years 12 and 13

Each student is advised as to the most suitable options open to them. Normally it is recommended that each student takes **at least four AS levels in Year 12**, in addition to Lengua Española and A level Spanish, and continue with three A levels in Year 13. The Spanish Advanced Level is taken in Year 12, as most of our pupils have a very high level of Spanish. At ISM all students are expected to obtain more than the minimum number of passes needed for validation of studies with the Spanish Ministry.

Admission into Year 12 will require at least five IGCSE passes (grade C) which do not include Spanish, and acceptance by teachers on at least three Advanced Subsidiary (AS) courses, which do not include Advanced level Spanish. It is expected that for AS and A level a grade **A or B** is achieved at IGCSE for the subject that the student wishes to study. Two examples: for Physics A level, a B or a C grade Extended Maths at IGCSE is necessary, and for French, an A grade.

The following A/AS Level subjects are offered:

- | | |
|---|---|
| * <u>Languages</u> : - | English Literature, French, Spanish |
| * <u>Mathematics/Sciences/Technology</u> :- | Physics, Chemistry, Biology
Mathematics, ICT |
| * <u>Humanities/Arts</u> :- | History, Geography, Business Studies, Art and Design |

For the option blocks for 2010-11, see the Annex 1 'Admission into Years 12 and 13'.

- Spanish students in Years 12 and 13 (1^o y 2^o de Bachillerato)

The emphasis in Years 12 and 13 is on the Advanced Levels. If students wish to consider entering Spanish universities they can do so through **Direct Access** with A levels. All students who are thinking of the possibility of applying to Spanish universities and who want to obtain the 'Título de Bachillerato' MUST study the 'Lengua Española' course of '1^o y 2^o Bachillerato' plus other Science/Maths or Humanities options in Spanish.

- Other subjects

Catholic Religion or **Citizenship** (or Psicología' in Y13); **Sports**, including sporting events against other schools. **Drama** is an option to Sports. The school has a long history of theatrical productions (*Doña Rosita la soltera o el lenguaje de las flores*, by Federico García Lorca (1999); *Las de Caín*, of the Álvarez Quintero brothers (2001); *Asuntos de Familia* by Alfonso Paso (2002); *La casa de Bernarda Alba* by Federico García Lorca (2005); *West Side Story* (2006); *Chicago* (2007) and *The Little Shop of Horrors* (2008); *Grease* (2009); *Doña Rosita la soltera o el lenguaje de las flores*, by Federico García Lorca

(2010); *Mamma Mía* (2011). This year we are preparing another musical, '*Oliver*'.

iii) *The A and AS level qualification*

The official marks that will validate the qualifications of the A and AS level are A,B,C,D and E. **Please note that a pass grade at A/AS level is an 'E', not a 'C' as in IGCSE.** School reports reflect this difference.

C) CAMBRIDGE ESOL EXAMINATIONS (K.E.T., P.E.T., F.C.E., C.A.E. AND C.P.E.).

These are the ESOL (English For speakers of Another Language) of the University of Cambridge Examinations Board. K.E.T., P.E.T. and F.C.E. correspond to 'Waystage User', 'Threshold User' and 'Independent User.' Whilst K.E.T. (Key English Test) is a basic qualification in English, and a step towards P.E.T., the latter (Preliminary English Test) gives proof of English language competence at a basic level sufficient to 'survive' in everyday situations.

F.C.E. (First Certificate in English), the most widely taken of all the Cambridge EFL exams, gives proof of competence in English at an intermediate level. It is widely recognised in commerce, industry and educational institutions in Britain and other English-speaking countries.

In **I.S.M.** K.E.T. is taken in **Year 6**, P.E.T. in **Year 7** and FCE in **Year 9**. Cambridge Advanced English (C.A.E.) and Proficiency (C.P.E.) are normally taken in **Years 12 and 13** respectively.

II. University entrance

- British universities:

IGCSE, Advanced and Advanced Subsidiary qualifications are recognised world wide for entrance into university. Entrance to British universities is through U.C.A.S., (www.ucas.com) and the school prepares students well in advance with careers guidance, undertaken by staff. This is concerned with further education and careers, and we have up to date information (including booklets, university prospectuses, leaflets and videos). Three members of staff are responsible for this area, which includes Spanish universities. Teachers take great care to advise students about entrance to British universities, which include Oxford and Cambridge, US or Spanish universities, so that when the time comes to make applications, students are clear about the choices and the entrance process. PSAT and SAT examinations (for US Colleges and Universities) can also be arranged through the College Board. Students have at their disposal a **Careers** and Further Education section in the Study Room, and there are frequent careers talks and visits from university admissions officers organized by Ms. Begoña del Valle and Mr.Coughlan, who is the Key Stage 5 Coordinator, and is responsible for guidance for entrance to non-Spanish universities, assisted by KS5 tutors.

- Spanish universities:

Ms. Begoña del Valle and Rafael Mialdea advise students for entrance to Spanish universities. Students can apply to Spanish universities directly with their A levels, through a 'Credencial de Acceso Directo' based on the UCAS Tariff, that corresponds with the 'Fase General de la Prueba de Acceso'. Students have to do take the external UNED exams for the 'Fase Especifica'. In this way students can raise their mark for entrance to public universities. More information on these exams is given below in **Annex 1** (pages 6, 7and 8).

Students who wish to continue their higher education studies in the USA can take the U.S. College Board examinations (SATs). Pupils register online with College Board - www.collegeboard.com and the tests are taken at different times of the year at the American School of Madrid, a registered centre for the College Board.

Students at ISM can thus choose from the whole international range of university education.

Note on resources:

Web site for UK universities: www.ucas.com

Web site for Cambridge IGCSE and AS/A level syllabuses and past papers: www.cie.org.uk. See the section on [Qualifications](#).

Web site for the Edexcel examination board (University of London): www.edexcel.org.uk. At present this board is used for Advanced Level French only.

Note: *non-academic information about the school, such as philosophy, school rules, discipline, can be found on the web site (Bulletin, etc), or requested from the school office.*

Annex 1**Admission into Years 12 and 13**

With the arrangements for Direct Access to Spanish universities these following are the admission requirements for entry into Years 12 and 13:

Year 12

- At least five IGCSE passes (grade C) which do **not** include First or Foreign Language Spanish.
- Acceptance by teachers on at least **three** Advanced Subsidiary (AS) courses, which do **not** include Spanish Advanced Level.

Pupils choose subjects from a number of blocks (**A to D**). They may choose one from each. They also must do Blocks E to I.

Year 12 2011-2012			
Block			
A	<i>Biology</i>	<i>Business Studies</i>	<i>Art</i>
B	<i>Physics</i>	<i>French</i>	<i>Geography</i>
C	<i>Mathematics</i>	<i>Computing</i>	<i>History</i>
D	<i>Chemistry</i>	<i>English Literature</i>	
E	Advanced Level Spanish		
F	Cambridge Advanced English* (CAE).		
G	Lengua y Literatura Española (<i>compulsory for pupils whose first language is Spanish</i>)		
H	Normally some Spanish 'Bachillerato' subjects (**see below)		
I	Catholic Religion or Citizenship		
J	P.E., if timetabled, and Sports		

*CAE is optional, although recommended, also for English Literature students.

** **Matemáticas aplicadas a las ciencias sociales (compulsory)**, and two from: **Filosofía, Historia del Arte* or Geografía***

OR

****Matemáticas I, Física, Química**

Year 13

The minimum requirement for pupils to continue with A2 courses is **three** AS pass grades (A to E) at AS which does not include Spanish. Most subjects will require at least a **D** pass, which gives us a fair guarantee that a pass grade can be achieved at Advanced Level. Failure to satisfy these requirements will mean that a student will have to repeat Year 12. As far as Spanish studies are concerned, pupils need to pass Y12 in Lengua and Literatura, plus three other Spanish subjects.

Year 13 2010-2011			
Block			
A	Chemistry	Business Studies	Art
B	Physics	French	Geography
C	Mathematics	Computing	History
D	Biology	English Literature	
E	Cambridge Proficiency English* (CPE)		
F	Lengua y Literatura Española (compulsory for pupils whose first language is Spanish)		
G	Three Spanish 'Bachillerato' subjects (**see below)		
H	Catholic Religion or Citizenship, or Psychology		
I	Sports or Drama (2 periods per week).		

*CPE is optional, although recommended, also for English Literature students.

**Bachillerato Subjects	
Humanidades (Ciencias Sociales, ADE, Imagen y Sonido, Comunic. Audiovisual, etc)	Ciencias (Ingenierías y Biosanitaria)
Filosofía	Matemáticas II (compulsory)
Matemáticas CCSS (compulsory)	Física
Historia del Arte	Química
Geografía	Dibujo Técnico
Historia del Mundo Contemporáneo	

Pupils have to study and be examined at the end of the year in school exams and the 'Prueba Especifica' in **three** subjects from one column. 'Matemáticas' is compulsory, and they must choose two other subjects from the list.

Like most of the British schools in Spain, ISM has taken advantage of the '**Direct Access**' facility available to non-Spanish schools in Spain for students wishing to enter Spanish universities.

The AS and A2 examination results are converted on a scale system to points based on the UCAS tariff (used to calculate A level results for entry to a British University), and the Spanish Ministry of Education has fixed the equivalences of this tariff for the combination of grades for different university subjects (See the UNED web site).

The grade that pupils achieve through Direct Access is equivalent to the 'Fase General' of the new exam for entrance to Spanish public universities. In order to improve the grade for access to a Spanish university our students must take the examinations of the 'Fase Específica' subjects. This affects all our Y13 Spanish students who need the 'Convalidación del Título de Bachiller' and the 'Credencial de Acceso a la Universidad'.

Pupils will not be allowed to drop a subject during the year.

In order to obtain the Título de Bachiller, pupils will have to:

- Have passed Years 12 and 13, both in English and Spanish subjects
- Have obtained either one A level and 2 AS levels, or 2 A levels

To obtain the minimum mark (5) in the 'Credencial de acceso a la universidad' pupils need at least 140 points of the UCAS tariff.

Unjustified absenteeism or continued lack of punctuality for classes is also taken into account on assessing whether a student has passed the year. Non-fulfilment of these requirements will mean that the school will not be able to prepare or present pupils for entry into university.

Some useful internet sites

- **Cambridge International Examinations** board web site:
<http://www.cie.org.uk/qualifications/academic/uppersec/alevel>
- **Edexcel** examinations board web site:
- For the UCAS tariff: http://www.ucas.com/students/ucas_tariff/
- For UNED - www.uned.es (acceso directo).
- Nacional association of British Schools in Spain – useful links for teachers and families - <http://www.nabss.org/en/links1.php>