



OUNDLE

School



GCSE options

Fourth and Fifth Form 2021–2023

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Introduction

We aim to provide a broad and challenging curriculum for all pupils in the Fourth and Fifth Forms. The **core curriculum**, comprising English Language & English Literature, Mathematics and three principal school Sciences (Biology, Chemistry, Physics) is supplemented by the choice of five option subjects, of which one must be a modern foreign language. Some subjects follow a GCSE course, and others an IGCSE course, depending on which course we feel is superior educationally in any specific subject.

(I)GCSE grading: the 9–1 system

Examination boards offering GCSE and IGCSE qualifications in the UK are now using the new 9–1 grading scheme, in place of the A* to G system (though Cambridge IGCSE **Arabic** will continue to grade on the old system).

The reformed grading system aims to have more grades above the traditional “pass” boundary, thus allowing for more differentiation between high-achieving candidates. The highest grade is 9, which is used to identify the best candidates amongst those who would have received an A* under the previous system. Grade 5 represents a “strong pass”.

The Core Subjects

The qualifications for all of the core subjects are IGCSEs, which are an international equivalent of GCSEs and recognised as such by universities and employers. The following subjects are taken by all pupils:

English Language and English Literature

All pupils are prepared for two separate qualifications in English – the Edexcel IGCSE in English Language and the Edexcel IGCSE in English Literature. The qualifications are taught alongside each other throughout the Fourth and Fifth Forms. Pupils study a wide range of fiction and non-fiction texts in different genres and from different time periods (including works by Shakespeare, Austen and Dickens) and learn important skills of close analysis, reasoned argument and careful writing. Written coursework components in both subjects give pupils the opportunity to explore their own particular interests and enthusiasms, and are good preparation for the kind of independent work pupils will encounter in the Sixth Form.

Mathematics

All pupils sit the examination in the Fifth Form. Since September 2016 there have been a few small changes to the syllabus which reflect the changes in most GCSE courses, namely:

- Some minor additions to the content assessed at each tier to reflect the new 9–1 grading structure.
- A small increase in the Number & Algebra assessment objective weighting at the expense of Statistics.
- A few more questions on problem-solving and mathematical reasoning.
- A revised formulae sheet at each tier.

Sciences

All pupils are prepared for Edexcel IGCSEs in Science. In the Fourth Form, all sets are prepared to take the Triple Award (pupils achieving IGCSEs in Biology, Chemistry, and Physics). However, when they move into the Fifth Form, eight sets will continue to be prepared for the Triple Award and two sets for the Dual Award (pupils achieving two IGCSEs across all three of the Sciences). In all cases pupils will continue to study Biology, Chemistry and Physics as separate subjects. The make-up of these sets will be reviewed at the end of the Fourth Form and again after the Fifth Form Practice Exams.

The Option Subjects

Pupils choose **five** subjects from the following list.

Arabic	French	Latin
Art	Geography	Music
Chinese	German	Physical Education
Computing	Greek (Classical)	<u>Russian</u>
Design and Technology	History	Spanish
Drama	<u>Italian</u>	Theology, Philosophy and Religion

We encourage pupils to keep an open mind, and to consider all subjects and all possible subject combinations equally. The pupils' primary consideration should be in which subjects they have the most interest. However, it is important that the combination of subjects is well balanced and pupils should be aware of the implications of their subject choices on future career possibilities. Pupils who maintain breadth in their curriculum are unlikely to find themselves constrained later in their careers or in their choice of university course.

Pupils should discuss their options with their Tutors, Hsms and parents; they are also encouraged to speak to their subject teachers and to Heads of Departments about how subjects develop in the Fourth and Fifth Forms. The Careers Department (first floor, Cloisters) will help pupils seeking advice about subjects needed for various careers.

Provisional Third Form Option choices will be made via Hsms by Wednesday 27th February. An options grid will then be built around these choices. There will be further discussion at the Parents' Reception on Sunday 7th March, with **final choices** (fitting into the grid structure) submitted the following **Friday 12th March.**

Restrictions on choice

The large majority of pupils' first choices are accommodated where possible, though the School reserves the right to withdraw courses for which a quorate number of pupils does not exist. There are a few more general restrictions on pupils' choices, as follows.

- All pupils must choose five of the Options subjects listed above.
- All pupils must choose a **Modern Foreign Language** which is not their native tongue.
- Pupils cannot take both Italian and Russian.
- Pupils who wish to opt for more than two of **Art, Drama, Design and Technology** and **Physical Education** must also submit a second set of five choices which include only two of these subjects.

Modern Foreign Languages

We require all pupils to study to GCSE/IGCSE at least **one Modern Foreign Language** – usually a language that they are studying in the Third Form (French, German, Spanish, Arabic or Chinese). We do, however, also offer two-year Italian and Russian courses. All courses will conclude with examinations at the end of the Fifth Form. Since many Oundelians are likely to find themselves pursuing careers in an international context later in life, pupils are encouraged to consider opting for more than one language. Italian and Russian are two-year GCSE courses which are started *ab initio* in the Fourth Form and for this reason are better suited to our more able linguists (although pupils may not opt for both these languages). Pupils are advised to talk to their language teachers if they are unsure about which to choose.

Arabic and Russian are for those who would like to stand out from the crowd. There is a high demand and low supply of Arabic and Russian speakers in the western world and studying one of these languages would make an impressive addition to any CV or university application.

French, German, Italian and Spanish

We follow the Cambridge IGCSE courses in French, German, Spanish and Italian. Pupils are examined at the end of the Fifth Form, in four skills: Listening (25%), Reading (25%), Speaking (25%) and Writing (25%). There is no coursework or controlled assessment during the course. Practical skills and the use of the language in real life situations are strongly emphasised through the course content, but the syllabus also positively encourages exploration of the intellectual, artistic and social culture of the countries where the studied language is spoken. Extra-curricular activities in the department complement work covered in class.

Pupils are encouraged to practise their skills in the country of the language they are studying: we have exchanges with schools in France (Orléans), Germany (Hamburg) and Spain (El Puerto de Santa Maria, Cádiz and Granada), and also run trips to Nice in France (French IGCSE revision) and Spain.

Arabic

We follow the Cambridge IGCSE specification for Arabic, which builds on the work begun in the Third Form. All skills (reading, writing, listening and speaking) are assessed in an examination in the Fifth Form at the end of the course and the speaking test consists of a role-plays and two topic discussions. The course content is the same format as for the European languages we offer. Pupils will be required to review and consolidate their work on a regular basis. Arabic requires a consistent and disciplined approach to the learning process and we will be providing those opting for Arabic with some reading for the summer holidays to keep all the work they have done on the script going during the break.

Chinese

The course is designed for pupils who took up Chinese in the Third Form and who are learning Mandarin Chinese as a foreign language. We follow the AQA Specification (number 8673). By the end of this course, pupils will be able to use Mandarin Chinese effectively to sustain a practical communication. All four language skills are assessed in the Fifth Form. AQA GCSE Chinese Textbook 1 and 2, as well as their complementing on-line resources are used throughout two years.

The Department of Oriental Studies strongly believes in the importance of promoting the culture of a country alongside the study of its language for every language is inextricably linked to its speakers' culture, social norms and ways of seeing. Therefore, a wide range of extra – curricular activities are organised such as: watching and reviewing Chinese films and videos, learning to sing Chinese pop songs, celebrating traditional Chinese festivals, visiting China Town and the Chinese Gallery at the British Museum. A school trip to China, when it is finally safe to travel, can be organised if there is a viable number of participants.

Russian

We follow the new Edexcel GCSE specification for Russian. The Russian GCSE course is a two-year *ab initio* course to GCSE for non-native speakers.

All four skills (reading, writing, speaking and listening) are assessed in an examination in the Fifth Form at the end of the course and the speaking test consists of a role-play and a picture-based task, followed by some general conversation. In the reading paper there will be a short passage to translate from Russian into English and in the writing paper pupils are required to produce two short written pieces on topics covered during the course. Pupils will be encouraged to review and consolidate their work on a regular basis. Russian is absolutely accessible for most pupils, and top grades are achievable after just two years of study, but it does require a disciplined approach to the learning process. We will be providing those opting for Russian with a little book that explains the Cyrillic Alphabet in the hope that pupils will master this over the summer holidays in advance of starting the course.

Art

Art is an option which concentrates on the development of practical skills. Pupils who feel that, at this stage, they lack the talent to choose Art at GCSE should not be put off, as genuine interest, organisation and self-discipline are the most important attributes. The first term of the course is based on teacher-led projects which allow pupils to build on their skills and develop techniques. In the second term pupils have the opportunity to follow their own personal path and start to explore their options in the development and production of their Coursework Portfolio. The Art Department follows a Fine Art course, concentrating on the following disciplines: drawing, painting, printmaking and sculpture. The GCSE course is split into two units, the Coursework Portfolio (60%) and an Exam (40%). The Coursework Portfolio allows pupils to develop their ideas through experimentation and the refining of techniques and skills in their preparatory studies before producing a final piece or pieces of work. Exam takes place over a ten-hour period although the question paper is issued in January, allowing pupils time to select a starting point and prepare thoroughly in advance.

Computer Science

This is a new exciting and challenging course which provides scope for pupils to explore complex elements of Computing. It does not require any previous study of the subject. There are two examined elements to the course, *written exams (1½ hours each with 50% weighting each)* dealing with system architecture, computer hardware, the representation of data in computer systems, databases, computer communications, networking, the ethical, legal, cultural and environmental impact of digital technology, cyber security, computational logic and Algorithms.

In addition, pupils will learn how to program in Python, and will complete a project of their choice which will give them the opportunity to analyse a problem, then design, code and test a solution to their chosen problem. This provides considerable scope for extension work for more able students. All pupils will compete in the Bebras computational thinking challenge and the most able programmers will also be given the opportunity to compete in the prestigious British Informatics Olympiad.

Design and Technology

Design and Technology is a subject that brings learning to life, requiring learners to apply their learning to real-life situations. This qualification aims to relate authentic real-world awareness of iterative design practices and strategies used by the creative, engineering and manufacturing industries. Pupils will be required to use critical thinking, leading towards invention and design innovation, to design and make prototypes that solve real and relevant problems, considering their own and others' needs, wants and values. This new dynamic and academically rigorous course consists of a two-hour theoretical written paper based around 'The principles of Design and Technology' worth 50% of the qualification; accompanied by an 'Iterative Design Challenge' (controlled assessment 40hr brief) that is again worth 50% of the course assessment. This syllabus embraces the very latest in design philosophy, pedagogy and manufacturing techniques which Oundelians are fortunate to learn about and put into practice over two years in the outstanding, state of the art, Patrick Engineering Centre.

Drama

Drama promotes active learning in a way that is unique. It fosters pupils' creativity, promotes communication and analytical skills and requires self-discipline as well as the ability to work collaboratively. It provides opportunities for pupils to explore a range of different skills including writing and design as well as performance skills. The course encourages pupils to make connections between theatre, literature and to draw on experience of a wide range of subjects in order to broaden their intellectual understanding of the content as well as evaluate their own and others' work.

There are three Components in Drama which include the preparation and performance of a devised piece of theatre (which includes a preparation portfolio) worth 40% of the final mark, the preparation and performance of an extract of text worth 20%. It is possible to take a design option in both units (e.g. lighting, costume, sound) rather than acting. The final Component is a written examination worth 40% and is based on the study of one text and a review of one live Theatre performance. All pupils opting for Drama will be required to attend professional theatre performances both in The Stahl and elsewhere.

Geography

The Edexcel IGCSE course includes the study of both Physical and Human Geography. Pupils will study Coastal and Hazardous Environments, Urban Environments and Economic Activity and Energy. Paper 1 (40% of the final grade, 1h10) and Paper 2 (60% of the final grade, 1¾ hours) both contain a mixture of multiple-choice, short-answer, data response and open-ended questions. Both Papers contain questions that ask pupils to draw on the fieldwork that they carried out on two day trips and Paper 2 will assess knowledge of Global Issues such as Climate Change, Globalisation, Migration and Fragile Environments. Studying IGCSE Geography also gives pupils access to the optional study visit to Iceland.

Greek

The GCSE Classical Greek course is made up of two halves: language and literature, each worth 50%. On the language side, pupils improve and consolidate their understanding of Greek grammar and continue to learn a defined set of core vocabulary, leading to a language paper which includes translation, comprehension, and the option of some simple English-Greek composition. The literature side involves reading and analysing two pieces of original Greek: one verse (either an extract from Homer's *Odyssey* or Euripides' *Bacchae*), and one prose (either an extract from Herodotus' *Histories* or Plato's *Phaedo*). There is no coursework in Classical Greek.

History

History IGCSE focuses on twentieth-century History. Pupils will study the following topics: Russia and the Soviet Union, 1905-24; Germany: development of dictatorship, 1918-45; A world divided: superpower relations, 1943-1972; and the Middle East: conflict, crisis and change, 1919-2012. There are two examinations at the end of two years. There is no coursework in History.

The course is beneficial for all candidates, ranging from those who wish to study Humanities /Arts subjects in the Sixth Form to those pupils who are set on a Science path but remain fascinated by the subject. Studying IGCSE History also gives pupils access to the 5th form study visit to Berlin.

Latin

The GCSE Latin course is made up of two halves: language and literature, each worth 50%. On the language side, pupils improve and consolidate their understanding of Latin grammar and continue to learn a defined set of core vocabulary, leading to a language paper which includes translation, comprehension, and the option of some simple English-Latin composition. The literature side involves reading and analysing two pieces of original Latin: one verse, and one prose. There is no coursework in Latin.

Music

The GCSE course is wonderfully diverse and engaging, and offers 'something for everyone' via its incorporation of three musical disciplines – Performing, Composing and Listening & Appraising: these offer terrific connectivity of distinct disciplines, and commendable breadth of opportunity to extend a pupil's musical interests. This is a GCSE that offers creativity, is collaborative in nature, and develops independence and analytical skills. All coursework - Composing and Performing - is fulfilled between academic class time and instrumental lessons, the former always having to be supervised in the classroom.

Performing (30%): 'Cash-in' on those instrumental lessons! Pupils perform both a solo and an ensemble performance, recorded towards the end of the course with a total time of at least 4 minutes. Performances may be on any instrument and/or voice and in any musical style.

Composing (30%): Pupils produce two compositions or two arrangements (or one of each) over the two-year course, usually using computers with Sibelius software. One of the compositions is free choice and the other is written to a set brief (from a choice of four) set by the examination board. The combined total time of compositions should be 3 minutes. The Music Department often lines up an ensemble-in-residence to inspire, workshop, play-through and record pupil compositions.

Listening and Appraising (40%): Pupils respond to questions based around the 8 set works during a 1¾ hour examination. Pupils study the musical elements, context and language of each set work. There is a requirement for students to read and write staff notation and to respond to unfamiliar music. To take this course you will need to be able to play one instrument or to sing. During the two years, the course comprises four diverse areas of study: 'Instrumental Music 1700-1820', 'Vocal Music', 'Music for Stage and Screen' and 'Fusions'.

Physical Education

This GCSE course provides candidates with an opportunity to study both the practical and theoretical aspects of Physical Education. It is designed to foster enjoyment in physical activity and to develop an understanding of effective physical performance. Pupils gain lifelong skills in planning, performing, analysing, improving and evaluating physical activities. Assessment is by two written papers (30% each - 60% total) and a practical component (40%). The first written paper assesses the pupils' knowledge on applied anatomy and physiology and the methods of physical training and the second paper focuses on the socio-cultural influences of sport, sports psychology, health, fitness and well-being. In the practical component pupils must undertake activities from three separate categories, and they must demonstrate the ability to analyse and improve their practical performance in one of these.

Theology, Philosophy and Religion

The IGCSE course is split into two parts, each assessed in a separate examination.

Part 1 (40% of the course) examines the history, beliefs and practices of two of the most influential world religions: Christianity and Islam.

Part 2 (60% of the course) examines the philosophy and ethics of religious and non-religious approaches to interesting questions. Examples of philosophical issues include whether it is possible to prove God's existence, whether there is life after death, how a good and all-powerful God can allow evil to exist, "The meaning of life" and "The human condition"; examples of ethical issues include euthanasia, abortion, war and peace, and racism.

Educational Support

Educational Support continues to be available to pupils on an individual basis in the Fourth and Fifth Form. This support is usually timetabled so that it does not clash with timetabled lessons or extra-curricular activities. In addition, the Educational Support Department runs a bookable Study Skills surgery which is open to all pupils.

Coursework

Some GCSE courses contain a coursework element. Coursework is independent work completed by pupils during the course which is submitted for formal assessment to the examination boards. Marks from coursework are combined with marks from examinations to form the overall grade. The proportion assessed by coursework varies from subject to subject. Similarly, rules for completion of coursework vary from subject to subject, including the amount of preparation, help available from teachers, the possibility of re-submission of marked pieces of work and time available for working on the piece outside the classroom.

Submission of work & plagiarism

There is one fundamental rule for all pieces of coursework which is that the work submitted must be the pupil's own. Pupils who do not adhere to the rules for one subject may be considered to be cheating by the examination boards with the possible result that they will be disqualified from any or all their (I)GCSE examinations.

Guidance & release of marks for coursework

The School's policy on the control of work submitted as part of a coursework portfolio is based on the advice of the HMC and regulations set out by JCQ.

Each department will, where appropriate, have a clear procedure for the production and assessment of pieces to be submitted as coursework.

Pupils may be given an indication that the work submitted adequately reflects the standard of work of which the pupil is capable. Only in cases where it is permitted by the Examination Board, pupils may be provided with written feedback on progress and standard of work to date in relation to expectation.

Pupils, parents/guardians and teaching staff are made aware that marks submitted to Examination Boards are subject to further external moderation and standardisation procedures.

List of subjects and examination codes

A summary of examination boards chosen for each subject is given in the table on the next page.

Notes

† All courses will be graded from 9–1 unless otherwise stated

‡ Pupils are entered for Science (Double Award) at the discretion of the Head of Science, after trial examination results are published in the Michaelmas Term of the Fifth Form. All pupils are taught the same content as for the separate awards of Biology, Chemistry and Physics until this point.

Links to examination board & specification websites

CIE



*part of
Cambridge Assessment*

Edexcel



part of Pearson

Eduqas



part of WJEC

OCR



*part of
Cambridge Assessment*

Subject		Grading [†]	IGCSE	Board	Code
Arabic		A*–G grading	IGCSE	CIE	0544
Art				OCR	J171
Biology	<i>core subject</i>		IGCSE	Edexcel	4BI1
Chemistry	<i>core subject</i>		IGCSE	Edexcel	4CH1
Chinese				AQA	8673
Computer Science				OCR	J276
Design and Technology				OCR	J310
Drama				WJEC	C690QS
English Language	<i>core subject</i>		IGCSE	Edexcel	4EA1
English Literature	<i>core subject</i>		IGCSE	Edexcel	4ET1
French			IGCSE	CIE	7156
Geography			IGCSE	Edexcel	4GE1
German			IGCSE	CIE	7159
Greek (Classical)				OCR	J292
History			IGCSE	Edexcel	4HI1
Italian			IGCSE	CIE	7164
Latin				OCR	J282
Mathematics	<i>core subject</i>		IGCSE	Edexcel	4MA1
Music				Edexcel	1MU0
Physical Education				OCR	J587
Physics	<i>core subject</i>		IGCSE	Edexcel	4PH1
Russian				Edexcel	1RU0
Science	<i>Double Award</i>	<i>core subject[‡]</i>	IGCSE	Edexcel	4SD0
Spanish			IGCSE	CIE	7160
Theology, Philosophy and Religion			IGCSE	Edexcel	4RS1

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