

WINGATE SCHOOL - EXAMS EXPLAINED

Here at Wingate school we have external exams at the end of Year 11 and periodically during Years 12 & 13 although the main bulk of exams are in May and June. We purchase exams from two exam boards: Cambridge International Exams (CIE); and Edexcel Pearson. Each subject Head decides which exam board they wish to use. These are explained in the Year 10 Options Booklet and the Sixth Form Prospectus, both of which can be found on the school website and both are updated annually. Students and parents have to register for exams in late January/early February. Late entries or changes to entries attract increased fees. The form given to students to be completed, shows the cost of each exam, the cost of each unit for some A Levels and the entry deadline date.

IGCSEs - International General Certificate of Education:

These 2 year courses, culminate in a number of final exams in May and June of Year 11. The number of subjects is dependent on each student but range from 9 subject exams to 5. The number of exams depends on the subject. For example, in Geography there are 3 written exams where as in PE there is a coursework element and 1 written exam. The Year 10 Options Booklet has details.

Traditionally, the results of these exams are released in mid August (CIE) but late August for Pearson Edexcel. Final grades range from A* to U. A* to C grades are classed as high level passes and grades C to G as a pass. Only a grade U is a fail.

The UK Department for Education (DFE) has instructed exam boards to change to a numerical system from 9 to U. International exam boards are slowly changing over in the next 2 to 3 years. When your child's exam results are released, there is very likely going to be a mix of letters and numbers for the next few years.

Levels 9 to 1 explained:

| New grading structure | Current grading structure |
|-----------------------|---------------------------|
| 9 | |
| 8 | A* |
| 7 | A |
| 6 | B |
| 5 | C |
| 4 | |
| 3 | D |
| 2 | E |
| 1 | F |
| | G |
| U | U |

As you can see there is not a direct correlation between the old system and the new.

New grade 5 (B/C) will be known as a 'strong pass' and a grade 4 (C) will be a 'standard pass'.

International schools and organisations will still recognise the new system.

We do not allow retakes of IGCSE exams in Wingate unless a student is part of the Sixth Form or ex-students may request to resit as an external student but only the following May and June.

GCE, A levels - General Certificate of Education, Advanced Levels:

For CIE subjects and some Edexcel Pearson subjects, students sit AS Level exams at the end of Year 12 and A2 Levels at the end of Year 13. The number of exams taken, as with IGCSEs, depends on the subject. Final grades are from A to E, below an E is a fail.

The AS and the A2 exam results are combined to form the final A Level grade. The AS result is a stand alone recognised result and attracts points towards University entrance.

Some subjects eg. Maths, take 6 component exams, 3 at AS and 3 at A2. The totals for each are added together to give a final AS and A2 grade. Individual components can be resat to boost an overall mark but please see the note on resits below. In Mathematics IAS students have to sit C1 (Core 1) C2 and can 'mix' their third choice to their specialist skills: Decision Maths 1, Statistics 1 or Mechanical 1. At A2 students take C3, C4 and D2, S2 or M2. Exceptional students can also take Further Maths and this will be decided upon in conjunction with Mr Finnie. Final A Level grades range from A* to E and below an E is a fail.

However, (here we go again!) the UK DFE have instructed exam boards to change to a 'Linear' system. International subjects will cross over in the next 2 or 3 years but Languages have adopted the new system already.

The new Linear System explained:

AS results no longer contribute to the final grade. They are stand alone and can contribute to a University application but do not form part of the final grade. We recommend students sit the AS exam but they can choose not to.

Students study for 2 years and sit final exams in Year 13, the exam covering everything studied in the two years. This is the same as the current IGCSE system. Students can opt to sit the final Year 13 exam in Year 12 if they wish.

International Advanced Levels:

Edexcel Pearson offer these exams which have a slightly different exam criteria to A Levels.

Science subjects:

Each subject sits 6 component exams which are combined for their final IAL grade.

IAS in Year 12: Students in Biology and Chemistry sit Unit 1 of the 3 in January. They can resit unit 1 and take unit 2 & 3 in May/June. They are shown separately on Results Certificates (often in lower case) but are combined to give an overall grade.

IALs in Year 13 are similar: 3 component units combined and then added to the IAS overall marks to give a final IAL Grade.

Mathematics:

The new IAS and IAL combine the Core exams into C12 in Year 12 and C34 in Year 13. As above, two other exams are taken, students deciding their speciality in conjunction with Mr Finnie.

The IAS and IAL results are combined for an overall final A* to E grade, below an E is a fail.

Resits:

IGCSE for either board can only be resat the following May & June

CIE GCE A Levels: Resit exams must be taken with a 13 month period. If a student sits an AS in May/June one year, the A2 level the following May/June, they are combined to give the overall grade. However, students cannot then resit the AS in the following November series as this is after the 13 months and must sit both AS & A2 again.

IAL Units: Students have the opportunity to resit individual units in October, January and May/June each year.

However, the highest mark of the previous 2 unit exams will be given as the overall mark. So should a student sit a 3rd time, then the last exam results are taken into consideration and the first exam result is superseded. Consequently, final results can go down as well as up.

Warning for Resits: Students resitting units during their Year 12 & 13 risk being distracted from their final exams especially in Year 13.

It is the exam boards intention that every student has the same experience and opportunity when taking their examinations, regardless of which school or where in the World the exam is taken. It is our aim therefore, to ensure this is always the case for your child.

I hope this helps to explain our exams system. There is also an External Exams Policy on the Policies area of the school website.

Mr Colin Macrae
Head of Wingate School