



SECONDARY CURRICULUM POLICY

Approved by: Secondary SLT

Date: August 2024

Review: August 2025

SECONDARY CURRICULUM POLICY

The Secondary School at the International School of Bucharest is for children aged 11-18 and provides a comprehensive British and International Secondary Curriculum. The structure of our curriculum closely follows the National Curriculum for England as well as the International Baccalaureate:

- Key Stage 3: Years 7, 8 & 9 for students aged 11-13
- Key Stage 4: Years 10 & 11, for students aged 14-15
- Key Stage 5: Years 12 & 13, for students aged 16-18

The age of the students is taken from a 1st September start

The Secondary Programme of Study at the International School of Bucharest provides students with a robust and challenging academic education. This is complemented by a range of extra-curricular activities, including Enrichment Activities on a Wednesday afternoon and residential school trips for Years 7,8,9,10 & 12.

We strongly believe in a positive behaviour strategy that supports our core values of Learn, Respect and Succeed. Staff strive to build positive relationships with pupils and we support them in fulfilling their individual potential, helping to prepare them for their futures whilst working closely with them on their personal, social and emotional development.

Key Stage 3 - Years 7,8 & 9

In Key Stage 3 we build upon prior knowledge as well as laying the foundations for lifelong learning. This time in a student's life is both challenging and rewarding and influences the subject choices they will make in Year 9.

Students follow the Cambridge Secondary Lower Curriculum in English, Mathematics and Science. The National Curriculum for England is used as a framework for learning in History, Geography, ICT, Music, Art, Drama, PHSCE and Physical Education. In Modern Foreign Languages students are offered the option to study Spanish or French as a Foreign Language. Additionally, all students study Romanian as a First or a Foreign Language, or Turkish as a First Language.

Key Stage 4 - Years 10 & 11

Most courses in Years 10 and 11 lead to the internationally recognised Cambridge Assessment International Education IGCSE qualifications. We aim to give every student a well-balanced choice of subjects during these two important years. The final examinations are externally set and marked by Cambridge. These examinations are the first of a two-step process towards qualifications needed for admission to universities around the world.

A minimum of eight IGCSE subjects are followed by students in Key Stage 4. Due to the requirements of the International Baccalaureate studied in Key Stage 5, all students will take the core subjects of English Language (plus English Literature for those who are able to), Mathematics and Global Perspectives. Students must also choose a Science (at least one from Biology, Chemistry or Physics), a Modern Foreign Language (French, Spanish or Turkish) plus a Humanities subject (at least one from History, Geography, Business Studies, Economics or

Sociology). Other optional subjects include Physical Education, Art & Design, Drama, ICT and Music. PSHE and core PE are also studied in Years 10 & 11, however, these two courses are internally set and do not lead to an IGCSE qualification.

Key Stage 5 - Years 12 & 13

All students in Years 12 and 13 follow the International Baccalaureate Diploma course (IBDP). The IBDP is a challenging two year course aimed at students aged 16-19. It leads to a qualification that is widely welcomed by the world's leading universities and employers. IB students learn more than a collection of facts. The Diploma Programme prepares students for further study and employment and encourages them to ask searching questions, learn how to learn, develop a strong sense of their own identity and culture, and develop the ability to communicate with and respect people from other countries and cultures.

Students are required to choose one subject from each of the 6 academic groups, although they can choose a second subject from groups 1 to 5 instead of a group 6 subject. Normally, students study 3 subjects at Higher Level (HL), and 3 subjects at Standard Level (SL). Whether studied at Higher or Standard Level, all subjects are weighted the same in the final Diploma, but more time is given to the teaching of HL subjects.

In addition, all students complete the 'IB Core': Theory of Knowledge (TOK) an Extended Essay (EE) and Creativity, Activity, Service(CAS). TOK encourages students to reflect upon the nature of knowledge and what it means to learn. The EE enables all students to develop independent research skills surrounding a topic of their choice, related to one of their IB courses; these skills are particularly favoured by universities. CAS enables students to get involved in the world around them, to learn through experience in a range of activities.

IB DP entry requirements

The ISB is committed to ensuring that students are adequately prepared for the rigour of the IB Diploma Programme. This policy establishes clear expectations and standards for students pursuing the IB Diploma after their IGCSE examinations.

Expectations:

1. Year 11 Academic Performance:
 - Students must achieve a minimum average grade of 3.00 or above *before the make-up session*) in each subject taken in Year 11 to be considered for the IB Diploma Programme.
2. IGCSE Examination Results and IB Higher Level (HL) Options:
 - A minimum grade of B in IGCSE examinations is recommended for students to select the corresponding IB HL subject option.
3. IGCSE Examination Results and IB Standard Level (SL) Options:
 - A minimum grade of C in IGCSE examinations is recommended for students to select the corresponding IB SL subject option.
4. Combination of HL and SL Options:
 - Students are recommended to secure at least 3 Bs and 3 Cs from the IGCSE exams to fulfil the subject requirements for the 3 HL and 3 SL options in the IB Diploma Programme.

5. English Language requirement

- Students are recommended to secure a minimum of a C from the IGCSE First English and/or Literature examinations. ESL students are recommended to secure a minimum of a B from the IGCSE English as a Second Language examinations.

English Support

The English Support (ESL) is offered to those students whose English level is below B1+ (according to the European Framework of Reference for Languages) or under 150 points on the Cambridge English Scale. The syllabus focuses on developing general competences in knowledge, skills and existential competence. The language activities include reception (reading and listening), production (speaking and writing) and interaction. At the end of the year, students take an official Cambridge examination which will assess their progress. Depending on their results, it will be decided whether they will continue with ESL or not.

Our teachers engage students by using a wide range of appropriate activities. Lessons are expected to be interactive and challenging with the aim of extending students' understanding. We also encourage the development of communication, collaboration, creativity and critical thinking skills. We have separately equipped rooms for ICT, Music, Drama and Art, Theatre, Science laboratories, an indoor Sports Hall and outdoor sports facilities.

Use of Technology

International School of Bucharest uses information technology as a way of enhancing its mission to teach the skills, knowledge and behaviors students will need as responsible citizens in the global community. In order to better prepare students for this, ISB has decided to implement the use of mobile technology in the form of iPads.

The goals of this programme are to empower students as:

- *problem solvers*
- *creators in a changing world*
- *become global citizens*

Assessment and Target Setting

We assess pupils through their written work, verbal participation, unit tests, projects, presentations and end-of-year examinations in May. Regular feedback, both verbally and through Educare provides indicators for both pupils and teachers of where the pupil is at a moment in time and what they need to aim for. In Year 11 & 13, students sit their mock examinations in January and the results of these examinations will give an indication of how they are likely to achieve in the final examinations in May/June.

Target setting is linked to the MidYis, Yellis and Alis tests that students take at the start of a Key Stage. These are used alongside careful attention from teachers to pupils' individual learning styles, motivation and needs.

Student Support Services

The SSS Department is an auxiliary department, supporting students with learning difficulties through different services. Students who are referred are assessed in order to identify the specific learning difficulty. This can be done in school or the students may be referred to specialists outside the school, depending on the complexity of the situation. Students who are identified with learning difficulties benefit from learning support in English and Maths, focusing on the development of sustainable learning strategies. This is usually done by withdrawing the students from lessons, once or twice a week and it can be individual or within a small group. Students are also supported by the SSS department indirectly by providing guidance and advice for teachers in order to cater for their needs as well as entering the classroom. The SSS department also works with the exam officers (CIE and IB) in order to provide access arrangements for the external examinations.

Homework

A general guideline for homework expectations per evening are:

Years 7 & 8 - up to one and a half hours

Year 9 - up to two hours

Years 10 & 11- up to two and a half hours

Years 12 & 13 - up to three hours

Information Evenings & Parental Meetings

Two Parent Evenings are arranged per year group over the course of the academic year where parents have the opportunity to meet with individual teachers to discuss their child's progress. The Secondary School also holds several information evenings throughout the year to give parents the opportunity to meet teachers and discuss IGCSE options the International Baccalaureate requirements and Year 6 to Year 7 transition.