



Bordeaux  
International  
School  
depuis 1987  
since 1987

# INTERNATIONAL A LEVEL PROGRAMME



Cambridge Assessment  
International Education





# International A-Levels at Bordeaux International School

**BIS offers a unique educational experience**, ensuring our students develop to their full potential. With students from around **twenty-five different nationalities**, the school offers the opportunity to flourish in a **truly international environment**.

Studying at Bordeaux International School combines the benefits of **high quality teaching in English**, with the experience of **living in France**, enjoying the **culture**, learning the French **language**, and gaining an **international diploma** (Cambridge International A-Level examinations).

There are three elements to the International A-Level programme at Bordeaux International School:

- Academic study
- Personal, social and global skills
- Extra-curricular activities





# Why come to Bordeaux?

Bordeaux International School is situated in the heart of the city and has been in existence for 32 years. Bordeaux is an historic town renowned for its architecture and its connection with the wine industry. It has a modern public tramway system and a reputation for being one of the safest cities in France. With an excellent climate and vast range of cultural activities, it is also listed as the world's largest urban UNESCO World heritage site. Bordeaux is considered one of the best places to live in France for quality of life - named European City 2015 - and has been voted third in the ranking for the most appealing city in France. Bordeaux is close to fantastic beaches, beautiful countryside, and benefits from a 2-hour high-speed train link with Paris.

**BIS has been a fully accredited member of the Council of International Schools (CIS) since 2000, is recognised by the French Ministry of Education, and a registered examination centre with Cambridge Assessment International Education.**





# Why Cambridge International Examinations?

**Cambridge International Examinations** is the world's largest provider of international education programmes and qualifications for 5 to 19 year olds.

More than 9000 schools in over 160 countries are part of the Cambridge learning community. They are committed to providing qualifications that are relevant, accurate, reliable, affordable and recognised by universities and employers worldwide.

Cambridge programmes and qualifications develop not only content but also skills. They help learners to bridge the gap to the next stage of education and the world of work. Cambridge learners are encouraged to be:

- confident in working with information and ideas – their own and those of others
- responsible for themselves and respectful of others
- reflective as learners
- innovative and equipped for new and future challenges
- engaged intellectually and socially, ready to make a difference.

Cambridge International AS and A Levels are international in outlook, but retain a local relevance. The syllabi provide opportunities for contextualised learning and the content has been created to suit a wide variety of schools, avoid cultural bias and develop essential lifelong skills, including creative thinking and problem-solving. Their aim is to balance knowledge, understanding and skills in qualifications which enable candidates to become effective learners and to provide a solid foundation for their continuing educational journey.





# Why Cambridge International Examinations?

Cambridge International AS and A Level curricula are flexible. It is possible to offer almost any combination from a wide range of subjects. The full A Level is a two-year course, and AS Level is typically one year.

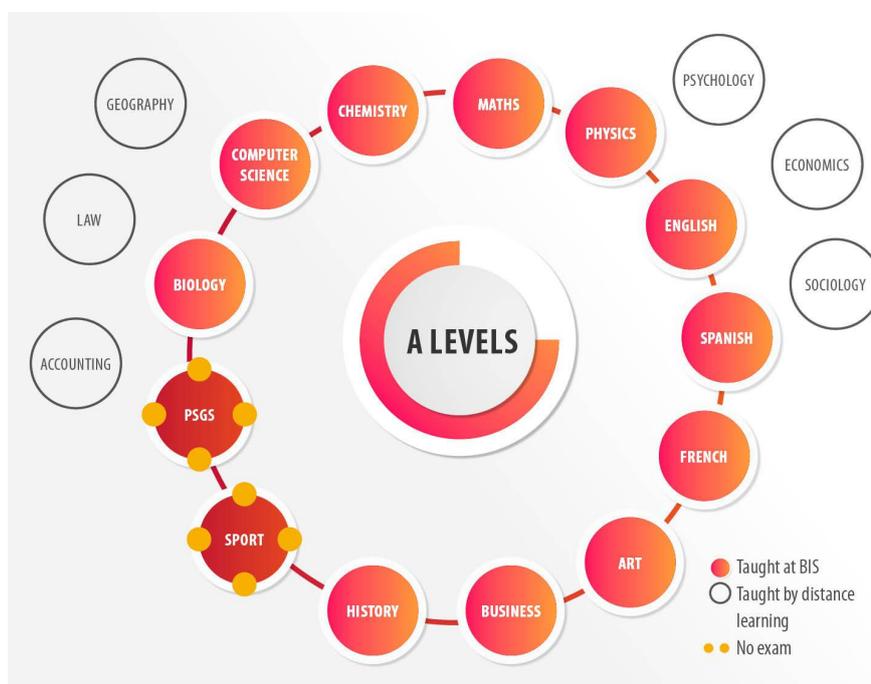
The qualifications are accepted and valued by top universities around the world including the UK (including Russel Group universities), US (including Ivy League), Europe, Australia, Canada, New Zealand and Asia.

## Academic Study

Students take three to four A Level subjects at exam level, as well as core non-exam subjects of PSGS (Personal, Social & Global Skills) and Sport, both taught in French. Studying French language is obligatory for all students.

Courses involve teacher contact lessons as well as teacher-guided study in the form of background reading, research, practice questions, written assignments and homework. Students receive 4.5 hours of teacher contact hours per week per subject and up to 4.5 hours of guided study to complete in their own time.

BIS has increased its range of offerings by giving students the option to study one subject via a distance learning course with Wolsey Hall, Oxford (at extra cost), include Law, Economics, Sociology, and Psychology. All students are required to study French at an appropriate level. All courses are subject to demand.





# Guidance & Orientation

All students are assigned a **tutor** who will personally guide them to achieve their full potential. They will also have individual interviews on a regular basis with the Head of Secondary to help them with their academic progress.

To prepare our students as global citizens in a competitive world, we run a **dedicated higher education counseling and orientation programme**, ensuring that students have the information, support and coaching needed to get on the right path towards achieving their ambitions.

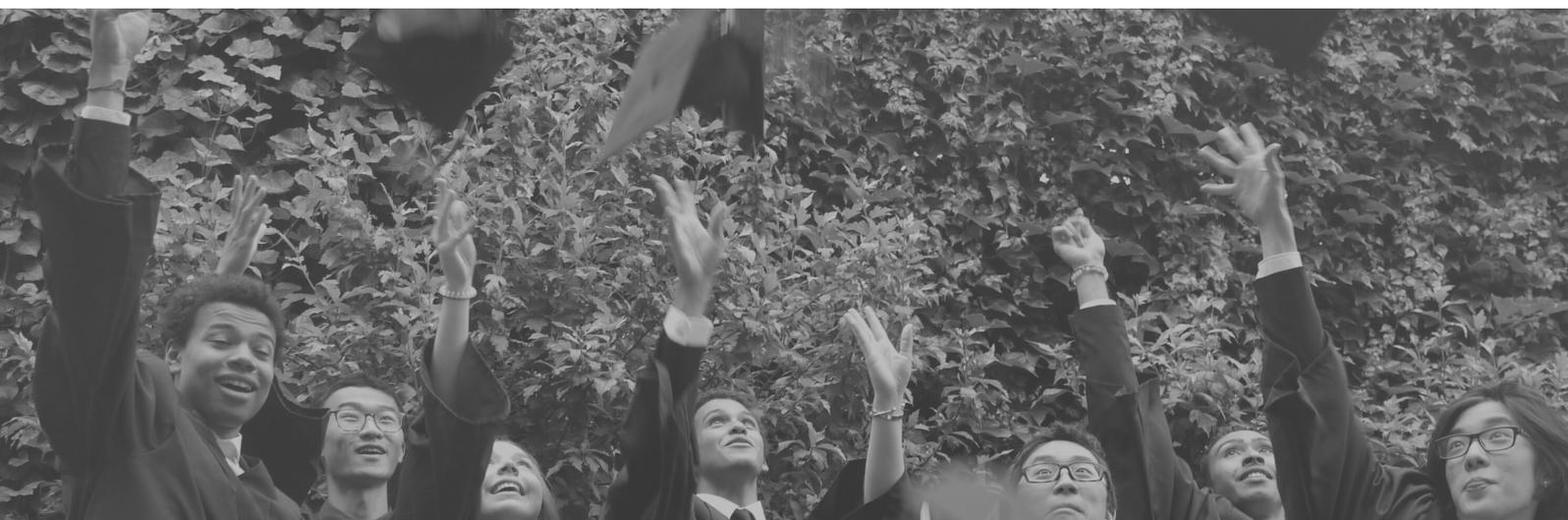
International A-Levels mean **access to world-class institutions**. France, the UK, the USA, and Canada are popular destination choices. We prepare, train and advise students extensively whilst supporting them through their application process.

## Higher Education

We offer tailored guidance on options for international study at degree level and beyond, full preparation and support for international university applications (including throughout the UK UCAS cycle), as well as coaching on writing personal statements. Students will also enjoy visits from leading international universities.

## Careers

Students benefit from inspirational talks from professionals in key fields, workshops (for example CV writing, interview technique and practice, start-up workshop), visits to business of interest, and the possibility of organising work placements.





# Duke of Edinburgh's International Award

**Young people need experiences outside the classroom to become committed, responsible and fulfilled citizens of the world.** The Duke of Edinburgh's International Award, also known as DofE, is available to all at BIS students aged 14 and above. It equips young people for life regardless of their background, culture, physical ability, skills and interests. The Award is a personal challenge and not a competition against others; it pushes young people to their limits, recognises their achievements, provides opportunities to develop skills, get physically active, give service and experience adventure. It is a programme of personal development recognised by universities and employers worldwide.

## The Award Framework

The Award is comprised of three levels (Bronze, Silver & Gold) and four sections. Participants complete all four sections at each level in order to achieve their Award. At Gold level, participants also complete a Residential Project.

The four sections comprise:

- Learning a skill
- Taking part in a service for the community
- Involvement with a sport
- Taking part in an expedition involving hiking and overnight camping.



## Mathematics

Mathematics is the most requested subject for university courses - an essential requirement for the sciences, engineering, medicine and psychology. The course develops a set of transferable skills such as working with mathematical information, as well as the ability to think logically and independently, consider accuracy, model situations mathematically, analyse results and reflect on findings.

Learners can apply these skills across a wide range of subjects, which will equip them well for progression to higher education or directly into employment.

At BIS students follow the Pure Mathematics with Probability and Statistics A Level course.

### Pure Mathematics

This course covers a combination of geometrical and algebraic topics. Some are an extension of ideas already encountered at International GCSE level: coordinate geometry, quadratic functions, and vectors. Other topics are new: binomial expansion, circular measures, and advanced functions analysis. In addition, students study the key elements of Higher Mathematics: differential and integral calculus.

### Probability and Statistics

Comprising the remaining 40% of the course, these components extend ideas met at International GCSE level statistics and probability, with an accent on the mathematical treatment of the reliability of results and predicted outcomes.

At AS and A2 there are 4 examinations:

- Pure Mathematics 1 (Paper 1): 30% of the final mark
- Pure Mathematics 3 (Paper 3): 30 % of the final mark
- Probability & Statistics 1 (Paper 4): 20% of the final mark
- Probability & Statistics 2 (Paper 5) 20% of the final mark.

Minimum level required: at least a grade B at GCSE level.



## English Literature

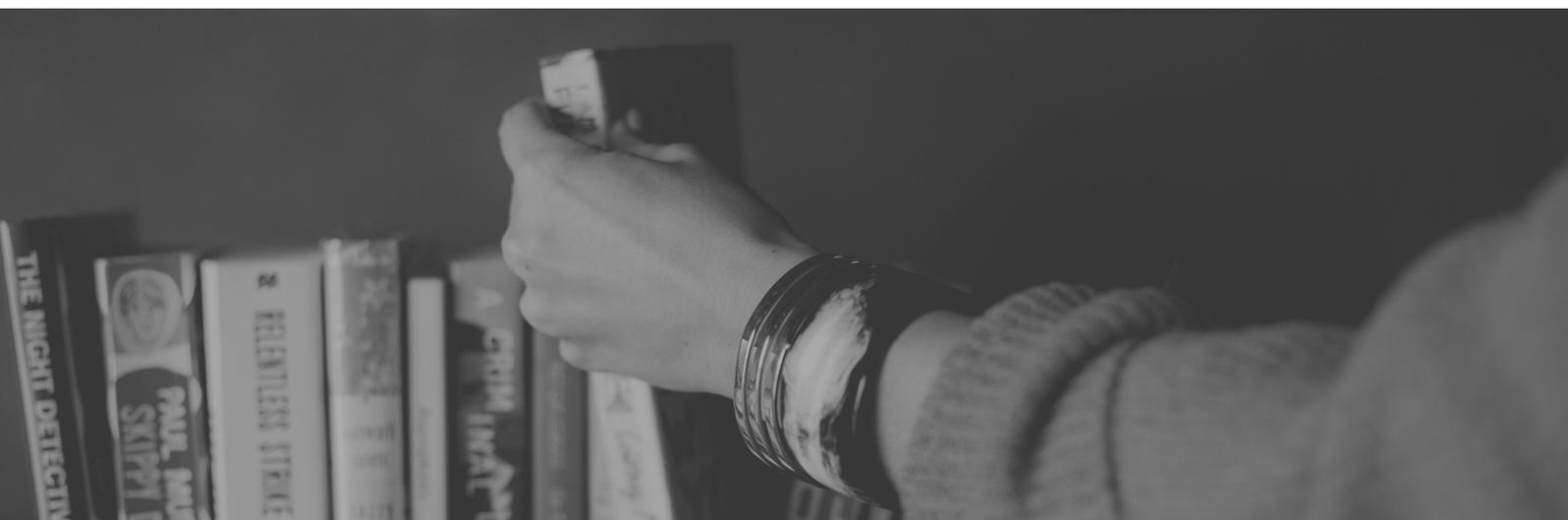
English Literature introduces students to a range of aspects of the English language and its culture. Studying literature includes discovering the traditions written about in other contexts, such as American, Canadian, Australasian or Indian literature.

The study of literature allows the development of new ideas and ethical standpoints, as well as insight into society. It is an enriching, eye-opening experience complementing all forms of advanced study, such as history. It develops the skills of analytical and critical thinking, expression of thought and construction of argument.

The Cambridge Advanced Literature course takes place over two years. During the first year of AS Level, students study four books in depth and take two exams lasting two hours each. These cover the genres of prose, poetry and drama, chosen from different historical periods.

The Advanced Level is completed in the second year, a further four books are studied and include both Shakespeare and contemporary global writers. Students take two exams lasting two hours each.

Minimum level required: B grade at GCSE or B2 on the language ladder.



## Chemistry

This course builds on the skills acquired at Cambridge IGCSE (or equivalent) level\*. The syllabus includes the main theoretical concepts, a section on current applications of chemistry, and a strong emphasis on advanced practical skills. These skills are assessed in a timetabled practical examination.

The world of the interaction of atoms and molecules is so complex in itself, it has a branch of science all to itself - Chemistry. It is an essential subject to have studied for a wide range of future university courses and careers including all branches of medicine, many engineering courses and design and structure careers.

The course has two parts: one, a concentration on understanding the concepts of physical Chemistry, and their application to industrial processes in the commercial world. The second, a detailed study of organic chemistry - the interaction of carbon, oxygen and hydrogen - an essential link with the field of Biology.

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## Chemistry continued

Candidates for AS certification will take three papers: Paper 1 is a multiple choice paper lasting 1 hour, Paper 2 consists of structured questions lasting 1 hour 15 minutes and Paper 3 is a 2-hour Advanced Practical skills exam.

At Advanced Level candidates take two more papers – Paper 4, a structured question paper lasting 2 hours and Paper 5 – a planning, analysis & evaluation paper lasting 1 hour 15 minutes.

\*It is an absolute requirement of this course that students will have attained at least a grade B at GCSE level in this subject, or will have studied the double award Co-ordinated Science GCSE course, and attained at least a grade B.





# Subject information

## **Biology**

This course builds on the skills acquired at Cambridge IGCSE (or equivalent) level\*. The syllabus includes the main theoretical concepts, a section on current applications of biology, and a strong emphasis on advanced practical skills. These skills are assessed in a timetabled practical examination.

Students have the opportunity to go on a three day field studies trip to the UK at the end of their first year of study, run by the Field Studies Council.

Biology is the complete study of all living things. The course develops concepts learnt at IGCSE level, and includes the study of all three aspects of biology, botany (the study of plants), zoology (the study of animals) and human biology. It is an essential subject to study for all future careers involving medicine, agriculture, and veterinary Science.

At AS candidates will take three papers: Paper 1 is a multiple choice paper lasting 1 hour, Paper 2 consists of structured questions lasting 1 hour 15 minutes and Paper 3 is a 2 hour Advanced Practical skills exam.

\* It is an absolute requirement of this course that students will have attained at least a grade B at GCSE level in this subject, or will have studied the double award Co-ordinated Science GCSE course, and attained at least a grade B.



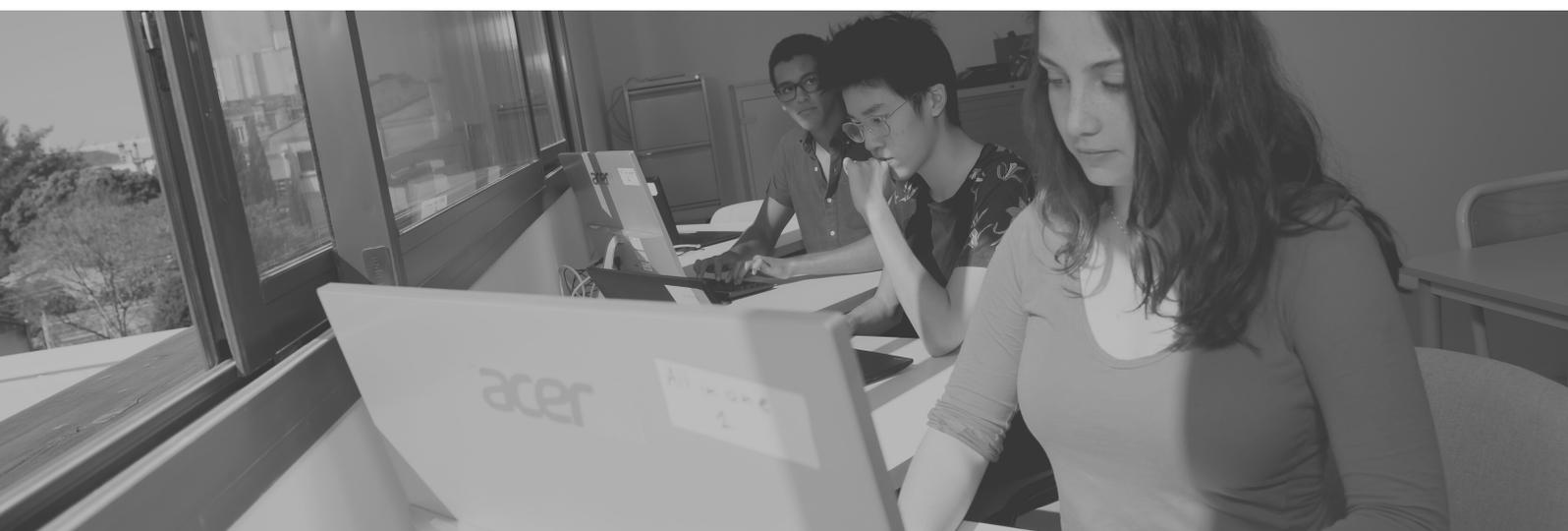
## Physics

Physics is the study of almost everything! The study of the universe, of planets, of buildings, of vehicles, of mobile phones and integrated circuits and of sub-atomic particles. The two exceptions are the study of the interactions of atoms and molecules - the basis of Chemistry - and the study of living things - Biology. The first year course includes a revision of the basics covered in Co-Ordinated Science\* - properties of matter, waves, electricity, nuclear physics and mechanics\*\*.

Candidates for AS certification will take three papers: Paper 1 is a multiple choice paper lasting 1 hour 15 minutes, Paper 2 consists of structured questions lasting 1 hour 15 minutes and Paper 3 is a 2 hour Advanced Practical skills exam.

The A2 course has a much greater emphasis on mathematical formulae and their application to physical principles, including advanced mechanics, thermal properties, electricity, electromagnetism, nuclear and quantum physics, medical and communication applications.

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## Physics continued

Candidates who wish to continue their studies to the full Advanced Level take two more papers – Paper 4, a structured question paper lasting 2 hours and Paper 5 – a planning, analysis & evaluation paper lasting 1 hour 15 minutes.

\* It is an absolute requirement of this course that students will have attained at least a grade B at GCSE level in this subject, or will have studied the double award Co-ordinated Science GCSE course, and attained at least a grade B.

\*\* It is a further requirement of the course that students will have attained at least a grade B in mathematics at GCSE level.



## History

History is both interesting and useful! As a history student, you will never experience the events that you study; instead you have to build up a picture from the evidence that has been left. You must become skilled at asking questions and not taking everything at face value. You have to develop empathy and understanding of the actions and achievements of others; you have to be prepared to put your case and argue it well; you have to use evidence to draw conclusions and make judgments. These skills are highly desirable in many different careers such as law, medicine, business, finance, accountancy, tourism, town planning, politics, journalism, research to name but a few!

Successful candidates gain lifelong skills including: assessing different interpretations of an argument, formulating their own ideas about a subject, presenting clear and logical arguments, evaluating historical evidence, developing an understanding of historical concepts such as cause and effect, similarity and difference and continuity and change.

AS students take two exams: one document question lasting 1 hour and one outline study lasting 1 hour 30 minutes.

Students who wish to go on to A-Level take a further two exams: a 1 hour interpretations exam and a depth study lasting 1 hour 30 minutes. Several topics are available including European, American and International history throughout the 19th & 20th Centuries.

Minimum level required is a "B" grade at GCSE level.



## French

BIS, one of the few international bilingual schools in France, is the ideal place to obtain excellent grades for either the International AS or the A Level in French, both of which are recognized as proof of linguistic ability and understanding. These courses aim to provide oral and written proficiency in French.

The AS level concentrates on the communication dimension of the language. The second year includes a more demanding literary element.

Both courses are designed to develop the ability to communicate confidently in French – both orally and in written form - within a variety of registers and situations. Students develop the skills and abilities required for further study, work and leisure. They will also gain an appreciation of different contemporary societies and cultures.

The course comprises three components for AS and four components for A Level:

- Speaking test: based on a chosen topic from a contemporary issue, linked with the Bordeaux region.
- Reading & writing: from a variety of recent press articles, to develop comprehension and vocabulary.
- Essay: on a topic chosen from a list of contemporary areas, to develop the mastery of essay writing.
- Texts: (2nd year) to foster the aptitude to analyse and study three or four major literary texts.

Minimum level required: B grade at GCSE or B2 on language ladder.





# Subject information

## Spanish

With the proximity of Spain and with its international community, BIS is ideal for students to obtain excellent grades for either the International AS or the full A Level in Spanish, both of which are recognized as proof of linguistic ability and understanding. The International Advanced Level is a two-year course aiming at providing proficiency in Spanish in both oral and written skills.

The AS level concentrates on the communication dimension of the language. The A2 includes a more demanding literary element.

Both courses are designed to develop the ability to communicate confidently in Spanish – both orally and in written form - within a variety of registers and situations. Students develop the skills and abilities required for further study, work and leisure. They will also gain an appreciation of different contemporary societies and cultures where Spanish is spoken, including South America.

The course comprises three components for AS and four further components at A2:

- Speaking test: based on a chosen topic from a contemporary issue.
- Reading & writing: from a variety of recent press articles, to develop comprehension and vocabulary.
- Essay: on a topic chosen from a list of contemporary areas, to develop the mastery of essay writing.
- Texts: (for A2 only) to foster the aptitude to analyse and study three or four major literary texts from Spanish-speaking writers, from Spain and South America.

Minimum level required: a “B” grade at GCSE or “B2” on language ladder.





# Subject information

## Business

Business is a major part of life and anybody who has a good idea about how businesses work is at an immediate advantage in the future. A-level Business provides students with the opportunities to develop important skills such as decision-making, problem-solving & communication that will be helpful in many higher education courses and for future employment.

A-Level Business enables learners to understand and appreciate the nature and scope of business, and the role it plays in society. The syllabus covers economic, environmental, ethical, governmental, legal, social and technological issues, and encourages a critical understanding of organisations, the markets they serve and the process of adding value. Learners examine the management of organisations and, in particular, the process of decision-making in a dynamic external environment.

The AS and A2 syllabi content is divided into six main topic areas: business & its environment, people in organizations (HRM), marketing, operations & project management, finance & accounting and strategic management (A2 only).

AS students take two exams – a short answer & essay paper lasting 1 hour 15 minutes and a data response paper lasting 1 hour 30 minutes. Candidates who wish to go on to full A-level also complete a case study & essay paper lasting 3 hours.

Candidates beginning this course are not expected to have studied Business previously, but should have both English and Mathematics GCSE at grade C or above.



## Art

The study of Art at A level is not just a course for those who would like to become professional artists. It is the course with perhaps the widest range of applications for all future courses and careers involving: the world of fashion, architecture, graphic design, advertising, film production, theatre and stage design, and all forms of visual communication.

The course continues to build on ideas developed in IGCSE with the study of expression used by a variety of artists both modern and from different periods in history. More than anything, the study of Art at A level means the development and expression of one's own talent and personality. For that reason, assessment tries to include a wide a range of options as possible.

For AS level the assessment has two components. Coursework (40%) completed during the year based on a wide variety of themes, and a controlled exam (60%) lasting 15 hours based on a topic given a month in advance.

For the second year, the range of topics is virtually limitless. At the start of the year, students send a written submission to Cambridge outlining the area they wish to personally study. When they receive approval from Cambridge, this forms the object of the majority of their assessment for the year.

Minimum level required is a "B" grade at GCSE level.





# Subject information

## **Personal, Social & Global Skills (PSGS)**

An obligatory part of A-Level study at BIS includes a personalised PSGS programme which aims to:

- Increase student awareness of strengths and areas for growth
- Undertake new challenges
- Plan and initiate activities
- Work collaboratively with others
- Show perseverance and commitment
- Engage with issues of global importance
- Consider ethical implications
- Develop new skills

## **Within the School**

Students attend one double PSGS lesson per week to complete a social education programme that broaches subjects such as health, politics, human rights and sustainability.

Throughout the year, A Level students act as 'Monitors' to provide guidance and assistance to younger members of the school.

International Advanced Level study is intense and demanding, but as senior member of the school, students are expected to act both as role models for younger students and to take an active part in the life of the school. They assist in the organization of the school, monitoring younger students and participating in extra-curricular activities.

They are also encouraged to take advantage of one of the unique features of Bordeaux International School – the fact that it caters for students from the age of 3 to 19 with a vast variety of languages and nationalities. As such, students in A Level are encouraged to devote one or two lessons each week to helping primary students on an individual or small group basis (for example reading in their second language or elementary Maths).





# Other information

## **Leisure and Social Activities**

As well as sport being part of the curriculum, students have the possibility to take part in local sports teams. Various after school clubs offer a range of extracurricular activities, such as Debate Club and School Band.

Bordeaux International School is located in the city centre. We want our students, and particularly our older students, to involve themselves fully in French life and culture, not to feel that they are attending an 'English' School in France. Bordeaux is a beautiful city with many museums, art galleries, restaurants and cafés: we encourage students to get to know the city, to experience its ambiance, and to enjoy its festivals and artistic events, so that they gain the maximum from living in a vibrant French city – an experience they will remember for life.

Bordeaux is lucky to be within easy reach of world-class beaches, the Dordogne, and the Basque Country. Spain is just a short hop away and Paris can be reached by TGV in two hours!

## **School Trips and excursions**

Students are involved in regular outings and visits, both locally and further afield. Each year pupils have the opportunity to take part in extended regional and international trips, including a biannual trip to Canada.





# Other information

## **Accommodation - homestay**

BIS offers accommodation for students living away from home in carefully selected French families living close to the school. This is an ideal arrangement for students whose parents live a long way from the school and is also the most effective way to gain fluency and absorb the French language and culture.

Host families are carefully vetted by the school coordinator, who is available on a 24/7 basis. We consult the student's parents and introduce both families before the student moves in. It is vital that the student is happy in their host family and we devote great care to their wellbeing.





# Why come to Bordeaux International School?

- Advanced Level classes are typically **groups of between five and ten students** which allows us to offer differentiated teaching and work with individual students on a one-to-one basis when necessary.
- We **follow the students' academic progress closely** and report to parents on a weekly basis, with more detailed reports and assessment grades at the end of each term.
- Newly **extended and renovated premises**, including a media centre and science lab.
- Wide range of **extra-curricular activities** are available, as well as access to top sports facilities.
- A **personal tutor** and dedicated **university counseling** that guarantees all motivated students access to higher education.
- A **friendly, personalised working environment**, and an individual desk in the private study hall for all A Level students.
- Living in one of the world's safest and most **beautiful cities**.
- **Excellent exam results** with a 100% pass rate

