

## 1) What are A Levels and how do they compare internationally?

Advanced Levels are the gold standard academic qualification in the British System. They are classed as a level 3 qualification (GCSEs are level 2). It allows students to specialise in 3 or 4 subjects of their choosing, related to their career or university course choice after sixth form. A Levels are very demanding and rigorous. In terms of depth and breadth of subject knowledge, they are probably the most demanding of all school qualifications available across the world.

## 2) How do I choose my A Level Subjects?

You will need to consider where you would like to be after school and what A levels (and grades) you need to get you there. Choose subjects that you are good at and enjoy. Remember there are subjects not studied at GCSE such as Psychology or Economics. For more information please use this PDF called Informed Choices from the Russell Group; <https://www.russellgroup.ac.uk/media/5272/informedchoices-print.pdf>

## 3) How many A Levels should I take?

3 or 4 are recommended plus optionally EPQ.

## 4) How much work will I do?

Students will have 9 hours per fortnight of lessons. Plus the requirement to study outside of lessons during the school day. There is also an expectation to study in the evenings which should be at least 2 hours. The need for initiative and independent learning cannot be underestimated. A requirement that grows as you move through year 12 into 13.

## 5) Does BSM offer the Extended Project Qualification (EPQ)?

Yes we do. It's a research project worth the same UCAS points as an AS Level. Very useful for growing an enquiring mind, for boosting qualification points totals and supporting personal statements to UCAS. To find out more visit:

<http://www.aqa.org.uk/programmes/aqa-baccalaureate/extended-project/the-aqa-epq>  
<http://www.birmingham.ac.uk/Documents/students/epq-presentation-2015.pdf>

## 6) How are A Levels changing currently?

From 2015, all A level courses (GCE status) in the UK are now linear. This means that there are no exams at the end of year 12, all of the exams are at the end of year 13. There is no opportunity to resit aspects of the course to improve the grade. Being in an international school we have the option of GCE courses or international courses (IAL). An IAL qualification is recognised and considered equivalent to a GCE by all UK universities. IAL courses are modular so there are exams to be taken at the end of year 12 which contribute to the final grade.

### What are BTec qualifications?

BTec are A Level equivalent (level 3) vocational courses which are widely accepted at UK Universities and are recognised by employers. It is a widely recognised qualification in the UK.

**7) How does life as a student studying A Levels differ to GCSE?**

Our A level students have a greater level of responsibility. We want you to be empowered to take opportunities, be a positive role model and show determination to develop yourself both personally and academically. You will lead your learning with support from your teachers. Immerse yourself in the subjects that you are studying.

**8) What is the difference between being Extra Curricular and Super Curricular?**

Extracurricular is an activity outside of the curriculum. Super curricular is about developing your academic knowledge and understanding of ideas within the your academic subject areas but beyond the school curriculum. For example wider reading of key texts from university reading lists or journals.

Coursera /EDX courses (free online courses from the some of the world's best universities). Any activity that will develop your communication skills or mental agility.

**9) Why is being Super Curricular important?**

University applicants are expected to demonstrate their interest in their chosen degree course beyond A Level courses. The very top universities assess the super-curricular development of prospective undergraduates at interview.

**10) What is UCAS?**

The University and Colleges Admissions Service, which is the UK organisation responsible for administering the online common university application to the institutions selected by the candidate. <https://www.ucas.com/>

**11) What are the UCAS Tariff tables?**

Students globally apply to UCAS with a huge range of qualifications. So that every qualification is interpreted into a common language, it is awarded points using the UCAS Tariff Tables. Many courses give their entry criteria in UCAS points. See more here: <https://www.ucas.com/advisers/guides-and-resources/tariff-2017>

**12) What university systems does BSM support?**

BSM prepares the majority of its students for access to a UK university through a UCAS application. We also prepare some students for universities in the USA through the Common Application process. We also deal with universities across the world directly, supporting students in preparing specific styles of application.

**13) Will I get the opportunity to talk to universities?**

BSM has a long standing and close relationship with many world class Universities, who invariably visit and meet with our students. Over 70 institutions in the last 12 months have been visited including to our university fair.

**14) What is a Tier 1 university?**

When a university is labelled as a 'tier 1' university, it is highly ranked in comparison tables.

**15) What is the Russell Group?**

The **Russell Group's** 24 members are world-class, research-intensive universities. They are unique institutions, each with their own history and ethos, but they share some distinguishing characteristics. In 2015-16, 417,000 undergraduates and 192,500 postgraduates were studying at a **Russell Group university**.

**16) What is home status?**

A student who has 'home status' will pay a lower rate for their university course compared to an international student.

**17) What do I need to get home status?**

Be able to demonstrate that you are still a UK resident and your international posting is temporary.

**18) Will BREXIT (Britain leaving the European Union) affect my University application?**

The actual impact of BREXIT is not known. It is thought that it will have a greater impact on international students rather than home status or British passport holders. The UK has not left the EU yet and this will take a minimum 2 years.