

GO FURTHER WITH

international **GCSE^{Plus}**

An exciting new way to develop the transferable skills
needed for success at sixth form and university





PUPILS AT YOUR SCHOOL NOW HAVE THE OPPORTUNITY TO TAKE ONE OR MORE OF THEIR INTERNATIONAL GCSE SUBJECTS FURTHER - BY COMPLETING AN INTERNATIONAL GCSE PLUS PROJECT.

International GCSE Plus allows pupils to explore a desired aspect of a subject in more depth, and connect it to their interests. Through this process, pupils develop a degree of expertise unmatched in their standard International GCSE lessons. It provides excellent preparation for success at sixth form, university and beyond.

HOW DOES IT WORK?

Schools that enter candidates for Oxford AQA International GCSEs can also offer **International GCSE Plus** alongside most of those subjects.

International GCSE Plus starts with 10 hours of taught skills to develop the required planning, research and essay-writing competencies – skills that will serve pupils well for years to come. Each project then requires 20 hours of teacher-supervised independent study as pupils plan, research and then summarise their findings in the form of a 2000-word report.

As evidence of achievement, pupils who pass their **International GCSE Plus** projects are awarded an endorsement on their Oxford AQA International GCSE certificate.

Pupils have the chance to receive an additional Pass, Merit or Distinction for subjects they complete their projects in.

Fail grades don't appear on the Oxford AQA International GCSE certificate. Additionally, if pupils don't achieve their desired grade, the school can withhold submission so that the endorsement does not appear on the certificate. This makes **International GCSE Plus** a perfect opportunity for encouraging academic risk-taking in preparation for success in future studies.

It would give students a chance to shine in their chosen subject.

Matthew Thomas, Senior Admissions Officer, King's College London.

Texas A&M values a student's academic and personal achievements. We look for not only involvement in activities but a level of commitment and leadership related to those activities both in school and within the community. We also look for students with unique experiences provided through activities such as the independent study and innovation/invention.

Texas A&M University



International GCSE Plus is available now with the following Oxford AQA International GCSEs:

- ✓ Biology
- ✓ Business
- ✓ Chemistry
- ✓ Combined Science
- ✓ Computer Science
- ✓ English Literature
- ✓ English as a Second Language
- ✓ Geography
- ✓ Mathematics
- ✓ Physics



We have many students in our sixth form who choose to take the Extended Project Qualification. Students find it an extremely valuable and fulfilling experience that prepares them well for the next stage of their academic career. If international students now have this opportunity at International GCSE level it should also provide an enriching learning experience that will help them develop the research and academic skills that they will need in sixth form and beyond. It should provide a welcome breadth and depth to their studies and demonstrate important skills of independent learning. It should allow them to pursue their own areas of interest beyond the syllabus and prepare them well for the next stage of their education and their career.

Andrew Gillespie, Director of Studies d'Overbroeck's Sixth Form, Oxford

STAND OUT FROM THE CROWD: Whatever the grade, **International GCSE Plus** projects enable pupils to demonstrate initiative and aptitude. They can be referred to in university interviews, CVs or LinkedIn profiles.

BEYOND THE INTERNATIONAL GCSE SYLLABUS...

An opportunity for 14-16 year-olds to be 'knowledge producers' – not just 'knowledge consumers'.

With *International GCSE Plus*, pupils have the chance to become the true specialists of their year group through exploration of a subject and its links with other disciplines. See how one small step towards project-based learning can have remarkable outcomes...



Jay is interested in space travel.

His school offers Oxford AQA International Physics. The subject content of this specification includes Space Physics.



Jay decided to explore the topic of Space in his *International GCSE Plus* Physics project. Here are some titles he's considering with his supervisor...

- What everyday benefits have we gained from space travel?
- Are galaxies becoming less diverse as the universe ages?
- Is the space elevator a viable option for transporting goods to near-Earth orbits?
- Could 'warp drive' ever exist?
- What evidence have we got for the shape of the universe?
- How do you design a menu for long-term space travel?

International GCSE Plus is brought to you by a department of the University of Oxford and AQA, the UK's largest provider of GCSEs.



✓ Our International GCSEs are based on the reformed GCSEs offered by AQA and taught in almost all of England's 6000 schools, colleges and learning centres. Each year AQA mark 7 million exam papers – that's 20% more than OCR (Cambridge Assessment's UK exam board).

Schools can nominate their best projects for special OxfordAQA awards!

FUTURE-READY SKILLS

Pupils who complete *International GCSE Plus* projects undertake 10 hours of taught skills so they are ready to excel in their projects.

1. Getting started

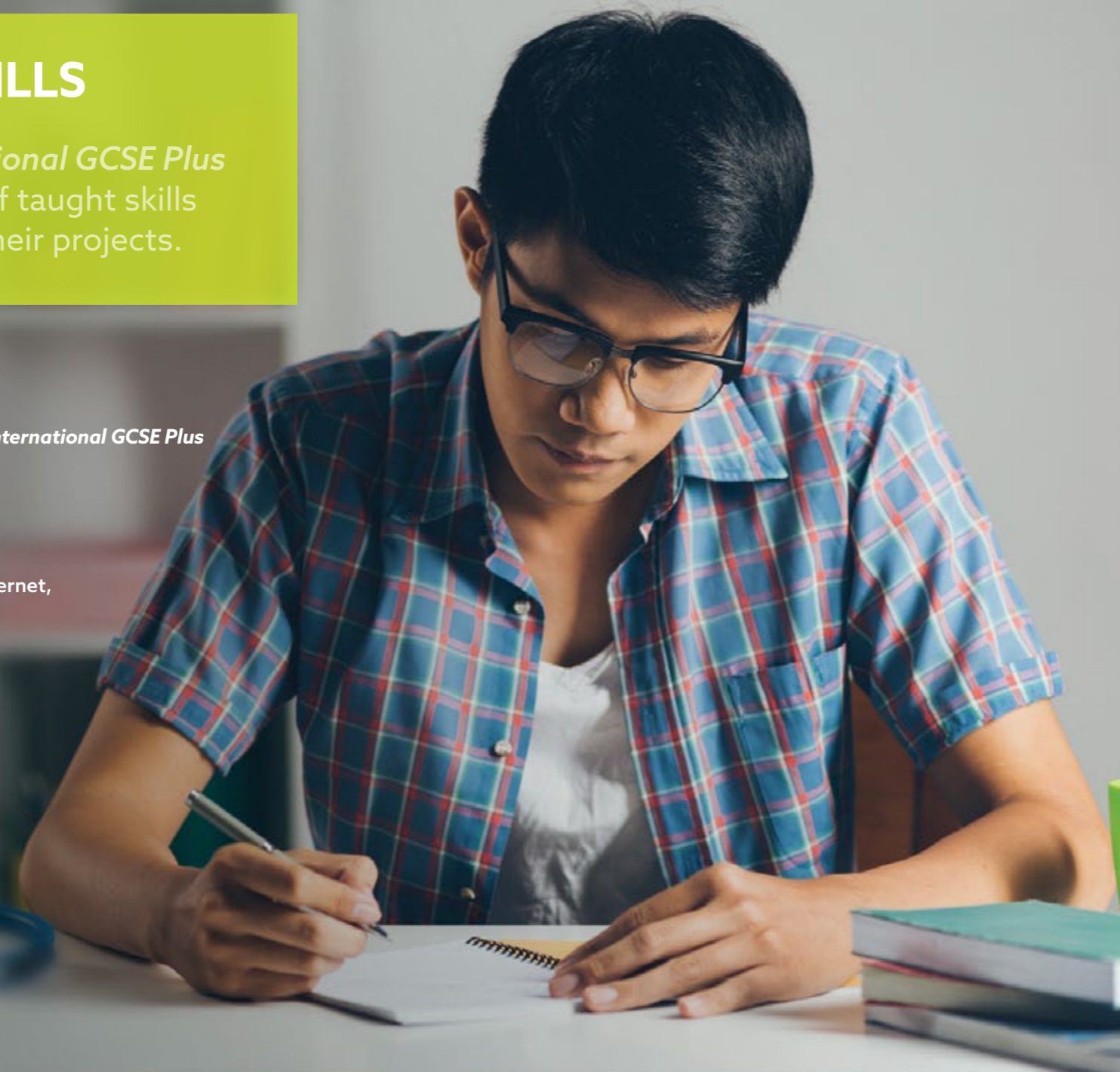
- Introduction to *International GCSE Plus*
- Accurately interpreting the requirements of *International GCSE Plus*
- Developing ideas into research questions
- Planning and managing the work

2. Research skills

- Resources (places, people, media, books, internet, specific journals, etc.)
- Primary and secondary research
- Taking a critical approach to sources
- Taking an ethical approach to research
- Making the best use of resources

3. Report writing

- Producing an appropriately presented report
- Appreciating the difference between narrative and evaluative report writing
- Formally acknowledged forms of referencing
- Avoidance of plagiarism
- How to produce a bibliography
- Conclusion
- Proof reading and editing (including an appreciation for word limit)



HOW PUPILS ARE ASSESSED

Projects are graded by the supervisors using assessment criteria provided by **OxfordAQA**. Grades are awarded based on four Assessment Objectives covering planning, research, report writing and student reflection.

Supporting teachers to support pupils

International GCSE Plus enables teachers to stoke curiosity in their subject and get the most from their pupils. OxfordAQA provides all the support needed to make this process successful and rewarding.

- ✓ Classroom handouts (covering the taught skills)★
- ✓ Scheme of Work★
- ✓ Scheme of Work Classroom Slide Deck★
- ✓ Teacher Guidance document★
- ✓ Progress Diary template★
- ✓ Marked exemplars★
- ✓ Standardisation training

ASSESSMENT OBJECTIVES

AO1 Organisation

Use appropriate guidance and a range of methods to develop and implement a proposal by:

- establishing appropriate aims and objectives
- planning the work
- managing the process, taking appropriate decisions where necessary

Weighting: **30%**

AO2 Research

Given the nature of the proposal, undertake appropriate research by:

- selecting information from a range of sources
- taking a critical approach to sources
- analysing information

30%

AO3 Realisation

Produce a 2000-word written report that achieves agreed aims and objectives by:

- synthesising the research, identifying relevant links and connections
- drawing pertinent and well-supported conclusions
- being appropriately presented and referenced

30%

AO4 Review

Evaluate outcomes by:

- analysing the strengths and weaknesses of the organisation, the research and the report

10%

★ Visit oxfordaqaexams.org.uk/gcseplus to view these resources.

YOUR QUESTIONS ON *INTERNATIONAL GCSE PLUS*, ANSWERED...

Q: What year should it be taken in?

A: *International GCSE Plus* projects are submitted after candidates are entered for their associated International GCSE exams in the same way as coursework. So if a school starts teaching an Oxford AQA International GCSE in September 2018 in preparation for the 2020 June exams, the corresponding *International GCSE Plus* project would be submitted in March 2020. Projects can be completed at any time prior to final exams; the school would simply withhold submitting the grades until entry time.

Q: Can we still do it if we do International GCSEs with another board?

A: Your school needs to be offering an Oxford AQA International GCSE in order to offer *International GCSE Plus* for that subject. Schools are free to select just one Oxford AQA International GCSE so that they may offer *International GCSE Plus* for that subject, whilst continuing with their current exam board for all other subjects.

Q: How many subjects should pupils do a *Plus* project in?

A: This is a decision for the school, as it will depend on the school's curriculum and timetable. Pupils can do just one *International GCSE Plus* project, or they could do several. We would recommend that pupils do a maximum of five *International GCSE Plus* projects.

Q: Would universities prefer a pupil with 8x International GCSEs at grade 9 and 2x *International GCSE Plus Distinctions*, or 10x International GCSEs at grade 9?

A: We cannot speculate how *International GCSE Plus* grades will be externally valued in relation to International GCSE standard grades. For the moment we should assume that the International GCSE standard grades will be the first priority for pupils and educators. The value in the graded *International GCSE Plus* endorsement is that it allows school-leavers to demonstrate a set of attributes that extend beyond the knowledge assessed in standard International GCSEs. Other educational institutions and future employers can use these grades as an indicator of aptitude for working independently on a research-based piece of analytic work, such as finding a solution to a complex business-related problem.

Q: If pupils fail, would this appear on their certificate?

A: No. As this is an optional endorsement, an unclassified grade would not appear on the pupil's certificate even if the grade is submitted.

Q: Can artefacts be submitted?

A: No. The outcome of an *International GCSE Plus* project is a 2000-word written report. Part of the pupil's research can involve gathering primary research through conducting experiments, surveys, observations, etc. but this would only be an aspect of a range of research, not the final outcome.



To download our full FAQ document, visit oxfordaqaexams.org.uk/gcseplus

To see the full *International GCSE Plus* specification, visit oxfordaqaexams.org.uk/gcseplus