




BSB

THE BRITISH
SCHOOL OF
BRUSSELS



Post-16: Years 12-13
Course Guide
2025-2026

Learning together
inspiring success

Welcome to Post-16

At Post-16 (Years 12 and 13) we offer a two-year programme for students in the Secondary School that is designed to support the varied individual needs of our learners. BSB is the only international school in Belgium which offers three pre-university programmes:

- Advanced Levels (A Levels)
- International Business and Technology Education Council Qualification (BTEC Level 3)
- International Baccalaureate Diploma (IB).

These include:

- More than 25 IB subjects
- More than 20 A Level subjects
- 3 BTEC subjects

We have high academic standards. Typically, around a third of our students gain the highest A*/A grades at A Level which is significantly above national levels. The pass rate and points average in the IB Diploma are typically much higher than the worldwide average and among the very best results in the world. BTEC students consistently achieve a 100% pass rate with the majority being awarded a Distinction/Distinction*.

There is an extensive range of enrichment activities available for our students and opportunities are provided for the development of their leadership skills.

What does Secondary School look like?

Year groups	Age	Programme of study	Other information
Years 7-9	11-14	A broad curriculum	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Solid foundation in a wide range of subjects
Years 10-11	14-16	Exam years <ul style="list-style-type: none">• (International) General Certificate of Secondary Education• BTEC Level 2 in Business also available as an option	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Two-year programme• Exams at the end of Year 11• 6 core subjects and 4 option choices• BTEC is vocational and is continually assessed
Years 12-13	16-18	Pre-university exam years <ul style="list-style-type: none">• A Level• IB• BTEC	<p>Two-year programmes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• A Level and IB have final exams• 3 subjects for A Level• 6 subjects for IB• Direct entry criteria apply

Assessment and reporting

- Students are regularly assessed in class
- School reports are issued four times in Year 12 and three times in Year 13
- Parents are invited to sessions to discuss their child's progress around the time of each report
- BTEC is continually assessed
- IB and A Level courses have internal exams at the end of Year 12 and students must be on track to meet the passing criteria of the IB Diploma or at least E grades in each A Level to progress into Year 13
- In Year 13 internal exams take place in the 2nd half of the Autumn term with final external exams taking place between April and June of Year 13

Post-16 Pathways

Overview

From these three programmes, we offer four Post-16 Pathways which provide an avenue for all BSB students to not only find academic success, but also feel equipped with the skills and approaches to learning needed to thrive in their chosen life beyond Secondary School. Each Post-16 Pathway leads to the awarding of a particular qualification or diploma, recognised by higher education institutions around the world. The awarded qualification, as well as the student's individually achieved results, will determine the scope of higher education institutions for which the student may be eligible to apply for admission. Consideration about which countries and/or institutions accept a particular qualification is essential before final decisions about pathways are made.

Research into any specifically desired university admissions requirements is essential by students and parents throughout this process. Support for this research is embedded into the Post-16 Pathway Options process from members of the Higher Education and BSB Futures team.

Guidance for choosing the 'right' Pathway

Our Post-16 Pathways are equally valued at BSB and allow for a choice of pathway best suited to supporting a student's individual growth and development towards future goals. Students are encouraged to pursue the most appropriately challenging pathway for their desired plans after BSB, and in which they can be successful.

Prior to choosing their Post-16 Pathway, students and parents must consider many factors, including the student's:

- Academic performance and results, particularly within Years 10-11, including GCSE results
- Individual learning needs
- Unique passions and interests
- Future goals and aspirations
- Preferences and/or limitations on higher education and/or career opportunities, including geographic and/or financial boundaries



Post-16 Pathways Options Process

The Post-16 Options Process is a collaborative and student-centred process aimed at supporting students in selecting their best fit Pathway.

Students and parents are supported in this process by a team of BSB staff members. The following principles guide our work:

- Student voice is a vital part of this process
- Clear, open, honest and frequent communication amongst all stakeholders is essential
- The use of multiple pieces of evidence/data points is key to making an informed decision
- All decisions should be made collaboratively and with the student's interests in mind
- All students should be able to find "success" on an appropriately chosen Pathway at BSB.

We have an experienced and passionate team to support students and parents throughout this process. Each team member offers expertise and guidance in varied areas and collaborates to provide comprehensive support. This team guides students through a thoughtful and future-oriented process of meaningful reflection, university/career research, and collaborative discussion to help students identify their best-fit Pathway.

Support Team

- Head of Post-16 and IB Co-ordinator – James Rollinson
- Head of Higher Education – Mark Andrews
- Higher Education Advisors – Rosana Morison and Fiona Macaulay
- BSB Futures Coordinator – Jo Craig
- Head of Year 11 – Debbie Scarlett
- Deputy Head of Curriculum – David Hindley

To further support students in choosing the pathway for them, we have articulated appropriate direct entry criteria for each Pathway which align with the rigor, depth, breadth and pace of learning necessary to find success in each programme of study. These will be detailed over the coming pages.

Overview of the Post-16 Pathways Options Process

Timeline in Year 11	Other information
October	Intro to Post-16 Pathway Options Process
	Exploration of two supporting tools: Unifrog and Morrisby assessment
	Post-16 Pathway Options evening
	Post-16 Pathways Exploration
November	A time for discussions with subject teachers and Post-16 team
Early December - Early January	Y11 Internal 'Mock' Examinations
	Internal 'Mock' Exam results released
Mid January	Post-16 Pathway Options submitted
Summer Term	GCSE Exams
Late August	GCSE Results released
Late August/Early September	Pathway/Course Changes for individual students, as needed.

A Levels

Advanced Levels Pathway

Advanced Levels (A Levels) is a rigorous, internationally recognised programme from the UK. A typical A Level programme consists of three A Level courses, allowing students to pursue courses which best align with their post-BSB plans, passions, interests, and strengths. In rare cases, students may wish to add a fourth subject in either Further Mathematics or a modern language. Additionally, A Level students will complete the Extended Project Qualification (EPQ), an independent piece of research done on a subject of the student's choice. They will also engage in our CAS Programme to promote creativity, physical activity, and community service.

The standard university requirement in the United Kingdom and Europe is three A Levels. This can be a combination of A Levels and BTEC (see next page). Occasionally, students of high mathematical or linguistic ability may take a fourth A Level in either Further Maths or a modern language, but this is exceptional. New A Level students who have not completed GCSEs will initially be placed in classes for Maths and English (I)GCSEs. It is possible for students to discontinue these classes but only following discussions with the Head of Post-16.

Structure and subjects available

Subject	Area
Sciences and Technology	Biology, Chemistry, Physics, Computer Science, Design and Technology, Textiles
Languages	English Literature, French, German, Spanish, Media Studies
Human, Social and Political Sciences	History, Economics, Sociology, Geography, Business Studies, Government and Politics
Mathematics	Maths, Further Maths
The Arts	Music, Music Technology, Art and Design, Drama

Please note that not all combinations of subjects are possible. Please refer to the current option blocks.

Direct Entry requirements

To support students in identifying whether A Levels is a suitable pathway for them, we require students to have earned a combination of at least three 6s and two 5s on their (I)GCSEs, preferably in courses aligned with their chosen A Level courses. This ensures students are capable of the depth of study required in their chosen A Level courses.

All new students will sit a diagnostic assessment, which will be sent to their previous school to complete. This is NOT an entry level test into BSB but rather a means to ascertaining the suitability of subjects and levels in advance of their arrival in September.

For some courses, as outlined below, there are some additional entry requirements:

Subject	(I)GCSE minimum entry requirements **
Biology, Chemistry and Physics	Grade 7 7 - 9 9 (Double Award)
Mathematics	Grade 7-9
Further Maths	Grade 8/9
All others being continued from (I)GCSE	Grade 6-9

* As the Science curricula are very mathematical, a grade 6 is desired in Maths in order to study Biology and Chemistry, and a grade 7 is desired in Maths in order to study Physics.

** Entry for students who miss the direct entry requirements by one or two grades can be considered on a case by case basis with additional conditions required.

International BTEC Level 3

BTEC Pathway

The International Business and Technical Education Council Qualification Level 3 is a two-year programme of study in vocational courses and is designed to prepare students for further study or career preparation in a field aligned with our BTEC course offerings. This pathway is a choice for everyone who prefers to “learn by doing” and continuous assessment rather than traditional examinations.

The International BTEC Pathway allows students to pursue either Subsidiary Diplomas in all three BTEC courses or the International BTEC “Extended Diploma” by choosing to pursue a Diploma in BTEC Business and a Subsidiary Diploma in either Hospitality or Sport. The BTEC qualifications are largely accepted at UK universities, and the BTEC “Extended Diploma” is also accepted at a select number of Dutch universities of Applied Sciences. More detail can be found in the Higher Education section at the end of this booklet.

- International BTEC Extended Diploma = Diploma in BTEC Business + Subsidiary Diploma in either Hospitality or Sport. Diploma in BTEC Business is a “double” class, equivalent to TWO A Levels.
- International Subsidiary Diploma in either Business, Hospitality, or Sport is a “single” class, equivalent to ONE A Level.
- Additionally, BTEC students will complete the Extended Project Qualification (EPQ), an independent piece of research done on a subject of the student’s choice and will also engage in our CAS Programme to promote creativity, physical activity, and community service.

Structure and subjects available

Subject	Qualification	Equivalence
Business	Subsidiary Diploma Diploma	Equivalent to one A Level Equivalent to two A Levels
Hospitality	Subsidiary Diploma	Equivalent to one A Level
Sport	Subsidiary Diploma	Equivalent to one A Level

Please note that not all combinations of subjects are possible. Please refer to the current option blocks.

Direct Entry requirements

New students arriving from other schools will be interviewed and will be expected to have reports indicating that they have a level of education equivalent to the grades indicated below. To support students in identifying whether BTEC is the right pathway for them, we recommend students to have a minimum of five (!)GCSEs at grade 4 and above. For students who have not done (!)GCSEs, equivalent results in their courses of study across Years 10-11 is recommended. However, due to the courses being continually assessed, there may be greater flexibility regarding direct entry criteria. Note: For students only intending to stay at BSB for one year, BTEC certificates may be possible. Talk to the Post-16 team if this is something you are considering. All new students will also take a diagnostic assessment before arrival. This is NOT an entry test.

A Level / BTEC Combination Pathway

Some students may be interested in doing a combination of two A Levels and one BTEC Subsidiary Diploma to best meet their needs and interests. This pathway is accepted at a wide range of universities in the UK as well as Applied Science universities in the Netherlands. A minimum of two A Levels are required for the latter. Additionally, students on the A Level / BTEC Combination Pathway will also engage in CAS to promote creativity, physical activity, and community service, and will complete the Extended Project Qualification (EPQ), an independent piece of research on a subject of the student’s choice. To support them in identifying whether the combination A Levels and BTEC Pathway is the right pathway for them, we require students to have a minimum of a grade 6 in their chosen (or closely related) courses for A Levels. For students who have not done (!)GCSEs, equivalent results in their courses of study across Years 10-11 is required. BTEC Level 3 subjects can be combined with A Levels although not all combinations can be catered for (see blocks).

* Please note; although the BTEC is accepted at some higher education institutions outside the UK, the individual BTEC qualifications tend to be only accepted at UK universities.

IB Diploma (International qualification)

International Baccalaureate (IB) Pathway

The International Baccalaureate (IB) Diploma Programme (DP) is a rigorous, internationally recognised two-year programme of study. The IB DP supports students who may wish to explore a broad range of subjects in Years 12-13. At its core, The IB DP promotes language and literacy, multi-lingualism, interdisciplinary learning, service, and international-mindedness. Students who choose the IB Diploma Programme must select six subjects from various IB groups. Required courses include Mathematics, two Languages, a Social Science, and a Science. For their sixth subject, students can choose a course from The Arts group or take a second Science or Social Science course. Additionally, IB DP students will engage in the IB's "Core" Components of Theory of Knowledge (ToK), the Extended Essay (EE) and the Creativity, Activity, and Service (CAS) Programme. Three subjects are studied at Higher Level (HL) and three at Standard Level (SL). In addition, students take the core components as shown in the table below:

Subject	What is it?	How is it assessed?
Theory of Knowledge (TOK)	Reflection on the nature of knowledge and on how we know what we claim to know	Exhibition and Essay
Extended Essay	Independent, self-directed piece of research	4,000-word essay
Creativity, Activity, Service (CAS)	Students are involved in a range of activities alongside their academic studies	Not formally assessed, but students reflect on their activities as part of the IB programme and must document this for the award of the diploma.

IB core components

Area	Subject
Studies in Language and Literature	English, French, Dutch, Self-study (SL only)
Language Acquisition	French, German, Spanish, Dutch
Individuals and Societies	History, Economics, Psychology, Geography, Business
Sciences	Physics, Biology, Chemistry, Environmental Systems and Societies (SL only) and Computer Science
Mathematics	Mathematics Analysis and Mathematics Applications
The Arts or an elective subject	Music, Visual Arts, Film, Theatre Arts or one of the subjects above

Please note that not all combinations of subjects are possible. Please refer to the current option blocks.

Direct Entry requirements

As the IB Diploma Programme is our most comprehensive programme of study, we have identified a path for Direct Entry** into the IB Diploma Programme. For Direct Entry onto the IB Diploma Programme, students require a minimum of three grade 6's in Maths, English and Science along with a further two grade 5's in their GCSE results. For students who have not taken (!)GCSEs, equivalent results in their courses of study across Years 10-11 is required for Direct Entry onto the IB Diploma Programme (please refer to section on entry requirements on page 5). In general, students require a minimum of five (!)GCSEs at grade 5 and above, including three at grade 6. There are some additional entry requirements:

All new students will sit diagnostic assessment, which will be sent to their previous school to complete. This NOT an entry level test into BSB but to ascertain the suitability of subjects and levels in advance of their arrival in September.

Subject	(!)GCSE minimum entry requirements
HL Biology, Chemistry and Physics*	Grade 7 7 - 9 9 (Double Award)
Mathematics HL Analysis	Grade 8/9
Mathematics HL Applications	Grade 7-9
Computer Science HL	Grade 7-9
All other HL subjects	Grade 6-9

*As the Science curricula are very mathematical, a grade 6 is desired in Maths in order to study Biology HL and Chemistry HL, and a grade 7 is desired in Maths in order to study Physics HL.

**Entry for students who miss the entry requirements by a grade or two will be considered on a case-by-case basis with additional conditions required. Consequently, while the IB pathway is unlikely to be the best fit for students who are entered for Foundation tier in Mathematics, the pathway can be considered.

How are each of the Post-16 pathways recognised by Higher Education institutions?

For those students who are intending to pursue Higher Education following their time at BSB, the following information will be of use in the options process

In general, very few university courses have GCSEs or Level 2 BTEC as part of the admissions requirements. New students to Year 11 should note that, if you go on to study A Levels, then it may not be possible to apply to some Dutch and Irish universities, as some require at least six different subjects at GCSE or A Level.

An International Baccalaureate (IB) Diploma is recognised globally as an entrance qualification

This is sometimes dependent on the subjects chosen for the Diploma. In some cases, specific grades are required.

Example 1	Example 2
On the course <i>Economics</i> at Tilburg, the Diploma must include Standard Level AA Maths (or higher).	<i>Economics</i> at LSE stipulates 38 points in total, with grades of 7, 6 & 6 at Higher Level (including a 7 in HL Maths).

Students considering entry in German or Swiss universities in particular should check carefully which IB subjects and levels are required.

A Levels are also globally recognised as a university entrance qualification

Most universities require three A Levels; some just two. The subjects/grades of the A Levels can have a bearing on whether or not an offer is made.

Example 1	Example 2
The Faculty of Science at McGill requires grades of A, A, A (must be in Maths and at least one science)	Most Dutch research unis consider grades of C,C,C as equivalent to an IB Diploma. However, some universities will not accept 'non-academic' subjects like Media or Art or DT .
Example 3	Example 4
For 4-year courses at Dutch Universities of Applied Science, two E grades are sufficient	<i>Communication Studies</i> at Concordia (in Montreal) requires a C and a D grade

- Most Dutch universities require six different subjects in total. This usually means A Levels & GCSEs (grade C/4 or above).
- Ireland expects A Level students to have also completed GCSE exams.
- A Levels in Spain require 'homologation' which is an involved bureaucratic process of equivalence.

Entry requirements for German, Swiss and Swedish universities must be checked carefully, including whether A Level results issued in August can be processed by the university in time.

The BTEC Extended Diploma is less widely accepted around the world

Most universities in the UK, including some highly selective ones, will treat it as the equivalent of three A Levels or the IB Diploma.

Universities of Applied Science in Belgium and the Netherlands accept the BTEC Extended Diploma, but research universities do not.

Some other European universities accept BTEC Extended Diploma as equivalent to IB/A Level. For example IE University in Madrid accepts the BTEC Extended Diploma.

BTEC is not accepted in Germany.

As with A Levels, universities can ask for specific grades and/or specific subjects.

Example 1

Business Management at the University of Surrey requires grades of D, D, D (D = Distinction).

The BTEC/A Level combination works well for UK universities

Numerous students in Britain have chosen this combination.

Many UK universities total the 'UCAS Points' from different qualifications, instead of simply asking for A Level grades/IB score. For example, Merit or a C grade = 32 Points; Distinction or A grade = 48. (EPQ carries half the points of A Levels).

Example 1

Criminology at Northumbria requires 120 UCAS Points. Some non-UK universities also accept a split qualification.

Example 2

Business at KU Leuven or Odisee in Brussels.

If there are two A Levels in the combination, this works fine with universities needing two A Levels (at grade E or above). An example of this is universities of applied sciences in the Netherlands. In these cases, most will also stipulate 4 GCSEs in different subjects at grade C/4 or above.

BTECs other than Extended Diploma need to be checked on a case-by-case basis.

General Remarks

Any of the four pathways above give students access to a large number of universities. However, for those students with specific university destinations or courses in mind, specific research is key. Different universities in each country will have differing requirements for their courses. Fortunately, universities generally make their entry requirements easy to find.

What resources do BSB students have access to as support to research and reflection?

Students at BSB benefit from excellent support with higher education decision-making. BSB uses tools such as the platform Unifrog to help students navigate the world of higher education. Students are also given the opportunity to generate a Morrisby Profile, to help them discover the options that will work well for them. **The Higher Education and BSB Futures team** meet students individually to help guide them in decisions about the future. In addition, a range of round-table discussions, talks and university fairs are routinely organised for students, exposing them to the myriad opportunities available and helping them make informed decisions.

FAQs

What is the class size?

The maximum class size is usually 14 students although this can occasionally be higher in exceptional circumstances.

Do you offer the bilingual IB Diploma?

For students with the appropriate linguistic abilities, it is possible to take both language options as language A (Language A means language taught at a level appropriate to a native speaker). A bilingual IB Diploma does not mean that all subjects are taught in two languages. The bilingual diploma can also be awarded to any student who takes one non-English language as Language A.

Can I join either of these year groups at any time?

No, the IB, A Levels and BTEC are challenging two-year courses. All students need to start in September of Year 12.

What happens if my child fails Year 12?

The vast majority of our students work hard and continue into Year 13. On a case-by-case basis, we may advise students to repeat Year 12, on a different pathway, but this is rare.

What support is offered for Post-18?

Students have access to the Head of Higher Education (HE) and the BSB Futures team, who provide advice on university courses and applications as well as other options beyond Year 13.

What do I need to bring with me?

A laptop is needed for all Post-16 students. In addition, a graphical calculator is required for Maths. The model is specified at the beginning of the course.

My child needs English as an additional language (EAL) support. What is provided?

Due to the challenging nature of the courses, students require an appropriate level of English to access the curriculum. For non-native English speakers, this is assessed prior to joining BSB.

My child has additional educational needs (AEN). How does the school help?

AEN students are assessed by the Head of Learning Support prior to joining BSB. If BSB is able to accommodate the student's needs, the application can be taken further and advice is given on appropriate courses.

Family testimonials



“ The BSB has excellent, kind and motivating teachers who made great efforts to integrate our son who came from a different school system. The enrichment activities are excellent, and the facilities are outstanding. ”

Aandahl family

“ BSB values each child as an individual. Students gain an open, internationally aware perspective on life. ”

Wallace family



“ A lovely and caring environment, both our children immediately felt welcome and included. Great learning support as soon as the need was identified. ”

Pollmeier family

“ The teachers always encouraged and respected my child’s efforts toward learning. He enjoyed his time at BSB and is really proud of being a student of BSB. ”

Inoue family



“ Excellent teaching in a wonderful community atmosphere, fantastic extra-curricular activities, good communication between the school, children and parents. ”

Meenan family



An international learning community

The British School of Brussels vzw
Pater Dupierreuxlaan 1, 3080 Tervuren, Belgium
Tel: +32 (0)2 766 04 30 – Fax: +32 (0)2 767 80 70

www.britishschool.be
Email: admissions@britishschool.be



Learning together
inspiring success