

External Examination Policy

POLICY FOR	External Examination
PERSON RESPONSIBLE	Assistant Principal Secondary
REVIEW DATE	May 2026
REVIEWED BY	TLA
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APPROVED BY	ELT
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RELATED POLICIES	Exam Contingency Policy, Assessment Policy

Executive Principal / CEO and Brand

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EXTERNAL EXAMINATION POLICY - 2026-27

The purpose of this policy is to set criteria for the registration process of external examination. This policy applies to students registered in Years 10 to 13 for the Academic Year 2026-2027

Principles and Definitions

As general guidance, The Westminster School, Dubai recommends that students are entered only for examinations in subjects they have studied at the school. Students are expected to sit their examinations at the end of the programme of study, when they are best prepared to achieve their highest possible grade. All students must appear for all subjects for which they are registered at The Westminster School, Dubai. The IGCSE programme of study typically spans two years, beginning in Year 9 or Year 10 depending on subject options. The AS Level programme is one year in duration, commencing in Year 12, while the A Level programme normally extends over two years, also beginning in Year 12.

Examination Registration in School – Year 11, 12 and 13

Students in **Years 11–13** will be registered for their subjects and syllabus components (e.g., **Core/Extended or FLE/ESL**) based on **school guidance and teachers’ professional recommendations**.

For **IGCSE subjects**, the initial allocation of syllabus components will be decided **at the end of Year 10**, based on **students’ performance in the Year 10 final examinations, assessment grades, teacher recommendations, and their readiness and commitment to learning**.

The **Year 10 final examinations will follow the board-style exam format**, providing students with authentic exam practice and helping determine the most appropriate syllabus pathway.

Additionally, students must maintain a minimum attendance of 92% in each subject to be eligible for examination registration.

Students cannot be registered for examinations at TWS without their teacher’s approval, though they may request a No Objection Certificate (NOC) to register at another approved examination centre. Students may also take additional subjects privately, provided these are in addition to the required subjects taken through the school, and they will be fully responsible for their own preparation.

The Westminster School, Dubai does not accept responsibility for the outcomes of private entries, and parents must sign a declaration confirming this. The school will endorse certificates only for subjects offered and taken by its students at the school’s designated examination centre.

If a student wishes to withdraw from a subject offered by the school and take the examination privately through an external centre (e.g., British Council), a formal withdrawal request must first be submitted to the school and approved by the examination board. Only after this approval may the student register privately. In such cases, the student will be fully responsible for their own preparation and study, as the school will not provide academic support for that subject.



Examination Series

The following table gives details of the examinations offered by the different examination boards in the series.

Examination Series	Examination Board	Program of Study
Summer (May/June)	Cambridge	IGCSE, AS, A Levels
	Pearson Edexcel	IGCSE, AS, A Levels
	Oxford AQA	IGCSE, AS, A Levels
Re-takes in Autumn (Oct/Nov)	Cambridge	AS Levels
	Pearson Edexcel	AS Levels
	Oxford AQA	AS Levels

All students **MUST** meet **Three Essential Criteria** to secure Admission into AS Level (Year 12):

- 1. Academic Achievement:** students must achieve a minimum of five Grade Bs at IGCSE level, including English and Mathematics (equivalent to Grade 6 or above at GCSE), with at least a Grade B (Grade 6 or above) in the subjects chosen for AS Level.
- 2. Consistent Academic Performance:** Students must demonstrate consistent performance in meeting the required academic standards across both internal (Mock 1 and Mock 2) and external assessments throughout the year.
- 3. Attendance and Conduct:** Students must meet the required attendance percentage i.e. 92% and above and maintain a clear behaviour record with no concerns.

Places will be awarded based on a thorough evaluation of grades, school reports, performance and availability in their chosen subjects. If successful, a conditional offer will be made and will be confirmed upon submission of final IGCSE/GCSE/AS grades in the month of August. In the case where a subject is over-enrolled with students achieving the minimum grade, places will be awarded using the marks achieved in the relevant IGCSE with higher marks given preference.

Students who were enrolled at The Westminster School in Year 11 but did not meet the full AS level entry requirements but meet the MOE equivalency criteria will have an option to register for BTEC Level 3 (Vocational Qualification), based on availability of seats .

Category	Progression Pathway to A Level	Remark
Students scoring minimum 5 B and above (equivalent to Grade 6 or above at GCSE) (Including Maths and English)	Full A Level Pathway	Students can choose maximum four or minimum three subjects from full range of AS/A Level Subjects
All Students who meet the MOE equivalency criteria	Blended A Level (International BTEC Level 3 (Vocational Qualification) along	Students can choose any one of the below courses <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • International BTEC Level 3 Business, • International BTEC Level 3 Information

	with one AS Level)	Technology <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • International BTEC Level 3 Travel and Tourism • International BTEC Level 3 Applied science along with one AS Level subject as per subject option form.
Students not meeting MOE Equivalency Criteria		Student will have option of repeating IGCSE

A Level (Year 13) Progression

Students must continue with the same subjects chosen in Year 12. New subjects cannot be selected in Year 13. Students are expected to study all their Year 12 subjects through to the end of Year 13.

A Level is a two-year programme, with Year 12 marks contributing 50% to the final A Level results.

Therefore, only students who achieve the minimum grade “D” or above in Year 12 only, will be allowed to progress to Year 13.

Private Entry

In certain circumstances, students may be entered through the school for additional subjects that they have prepared for privately. This is referred to as Private Entry. Private entry is permitted only for students who are fully enrolled at The Westminster School, Dubai.

Students who register for private entry through TWS are not permitted to register for the same or other subjects as private candidates at another external examination centre. The school will not be responsible for any timetable clashes arising from a breach of this requirement. Students taking private entries will not be permitted to appear for retake of examinations through the school.

Criteria for Private Entry:

To ensure fairness to all students and to enable effective examination scheduling, the following criteria must be met:

To be considered for private entry a student must:

- Be a fully enrolled student of The Westminster School, Dubai.
- Register for a subject that is taught in the school.
- Provide a valid reason for not selecting the subject as part of their regular school programme.
- Have a Cognitive Ability Test (CAT4) prediction of grade C or above for IGCSE.
- Have a MEG (Minimum Expected Grade) of grade B or above for AS and A Levels **subjects**.
- Have an attendance of at least 92% in the current academic year. Maintain **at least 92% attendance in the current academic year**.
- Arabic IGCSE may be taken as private entry

In exceptional circumstances, a student may request private entry without receiving tuition from the school, particularly where a subject is required for university admission but cannot be offered by the school. Such requests will be considered on a case-by-case basis, and the school's decision will be final.

No Objection Certificate (NOC)

The school will not issue an NOC for Year 10 or Year 11 students to take privately, at another centre, subjects they are registered for at TWS. An NOC may only be issued for additional subjects not offered by the school, subject to approval.

Certificate Endorsement

The school will endorse certificates only for subjects offered at The Westminster School, Dubai and taken by its students at the school's designated examination centre.

If an examination series is cancelled and predicted or centre-assessed grades are required, the school will not provide predictions or teacher-assessed grades for private entry students, even if they study other subjects at The Westminster School, Dubai. In such cases, the private examination entry will be withdrawn, and students must accept this condition at the time of registration. The school will also not provide forecast or predicted grades to examination boards or universities for private entry subjects.

Students in Years 12 and 13 must take examinations for all subjects offered and studied at The Westminster School, Dubai, and the school will not issue a No Objection Certificate (NOC) to take these subjects privately at another examination centre or board. An NOC may only be issued for additional subjects not offered by the school.

Private entries are permitted only for the May/June examination series, and the school will not be responsible for timetable clashes arising from privately registered additional subjects. It is also mandatory for all students to take English and Mathematics at The Westminster School, Dubai.

Year 10 IGCSE Examinations - In May/June (AY 2025-26)

English as a Second Language (ESL)

As a British Curriculum school, students are expected to study IGCSE First Language English (FLE) in Year 10. Based on the test results and teacher judgement at the end of year 10, students may be moved to English as a Second Language (ESL) in Year 11 at the school's discretion. Examination regulations do not allow students to take FLE and ESL in the same exam session.

Students who violate the agreements outlined in this policy without written approval from the Assistant Principal or Head of School may not be admitted to Year 12.

THE SCHOOL DOES NOT ENCOURAGE EARLY ENTRY IN ANY SUBJECT, AND ALL PRIVATE ENTRY EXAMINATIONS MUST BE TAKEN IN THE MAY/JUNE EXAMINATION SERIES.



Decisions on Private Entry

Decisions regarding private examination entries will be made by the Assistant Principal (Secondary) in consultation with Subject Leaders, based on the established criteria.

The matter may be referred to the Examinations Committee. Private entry will be approved only after submission of a signed agreement (by the Assistant Principal and parent) and payment of the examination fees, and no entry will be permitted without this agreement.

The following are decisions for students of Year 10-13 AY 2025-26:

For **AY 2026–27 (Years 11–13)**:

1. Private entry is permitted **only in the May/June examination series**.
2. **Year 11 students cannot withdraw** from subjects they have opted for and must appear for all registered examinations.
3. **Year 12 students must take AS subjects in June to progress to A levels. Year 12 students must take their AS Level examinations in June** in order to progress to A Level.
4. Year 13 students who withdraw from the May/June examinations will not be allowed to register for the same subjects in the Oct/Nov series at TWS.
5. Only students fully enrolled at The Westminster School, Dubai are eligible for private entry.

Retake Examinations :

1. Eligibility:

Retake entries are limited to subjects initially registered at the school.

IGCSE retakes are allowed only in the May/June examination series provided the subjects were originally registered through the school.

- AS Level retakes may be taken in the October/November session for Pearson Edexcel and CAIE, and the January session for Oxford AQA.

Students must obtain approval from their Subject Leader before registering for any retake.

2. Leave Policy:

- No leave will be approved during examination periods.

3. Attendance:

Students appearing for retake examinations must maintain a minimum attendance of 92%, failing which they may be disqualified from final registration for A Level studies at the school.

4. Private Registrations:

Students registering privately for retake examinations through the British Council or other external centers do so at their own responsibility, and the school will not be accountable for any administrative issues, withheld results, or coordination concerns.



Ministry of Education Equivalency Requirement:

For British curriculum schools, secondary certificates may be equivalenced to the UAE General Secondary Certificate if students meet the following conditions:

- Pass five IGCSE/GCSE subjects with grades *A–E* or *9–3**, including Mathematics, English (Language or Literature), and one Science subject (Physics, Chemistry, Biology, or Dual Science).
- Complete Year 13 (Grade 12).
- The student must pass either two AS Level subjects or one A Level subject with grades *A–E**, or successfully complete a BTEC Level 3 Diploma with a minimum of 90 approved credit hours, in accordance with the Ministry’s regulatory requirements.
- Arabic and Islamic Education are not included in the subject count for equivalency.

Disclaimer: The school will not be accountable if students do not appear for the required subjects at the school’s examination centre needed for Ministry equivalency.

