

CIE What is GCSE, AS level and A level?

- GCSEs (in Britain) IGCSEs (Internationally) and are received from completing Year 11 in high school, generally at age 16. This is the end of compulsory school attendance in the UK.
- AS (Advanced Subsidiary) levels are normally taken at age 17 in sixth form. AS Levels are sort of like Mock GCSE exams, but they are actually real qualifications that lead on to A levels.
- A levels at age 18, again in sixth form. Sixth forms can either be part of a high school or they can be separate institutions. They both provide the same assessments and normally the same learning experience.

Conditions of university entry can be based on A levels, GCSEs (for foundation degrees) or vocational qualifications that are equivalent to a set number of A levels, such as BTEC National Diplomas or NVQ Level 3 courses.

Comparing US and UK Education System

Although there are no official equivalencies between the US and UK education systems, most UK and US educators agree that a US high school diploma (without AP courses) can be roughly compared to five GCSE passes at grade C and above:

A US high school diploma with AP courses can be roughly compared to GCSEs plus A-levels

In England, A levels are two years further study after GCSEs and are equivalent to US college education, not high school graduation, unless the student has performed at an extremely high level and taken extra end-of-course tests and scored highly (SAT, ACT, etc. Depending on the individual State's system)