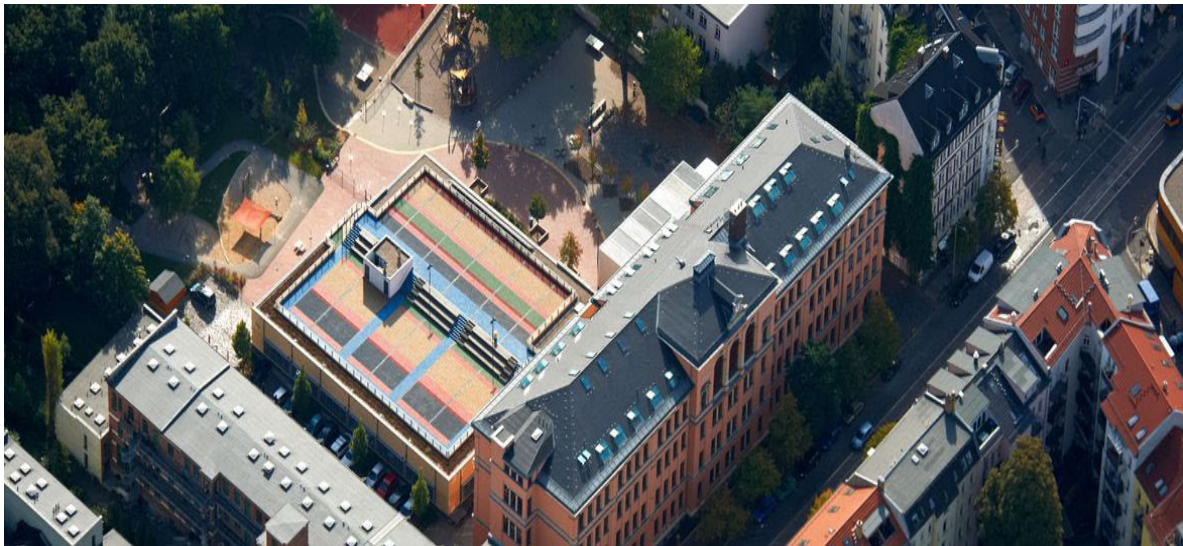


# LEIPZIG INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL



Secondary School – Credentials, Certificates & Conversions: Your guide to the complicated world of LIS qualifications in Germany and the World.

## Our Mission

Leipzig international School is an inclusive learning community which empowers and inspires today's learners to make meaningful impacts in tomorrow's world.

## Our Vision

Learning to be a Citizen of the World.

## OUR VALUES

### COURAGEOUS

- ✓ We have the courage to listen, empathize, persist, follow our passions, and grow.
- ✓ We have the courage of our convictions knowing that we are members of a supportive and respectful learning community.

### INCLUSIVE

- ✓ We embrace diversity by celebrating our common humanity, empowering all learners on their personal journeys of growth.

### PROUD

- ✓ We recognize the unique opportunity we have as members of the LIS community and we enthusiastically embrace our responsibility to make a positive impact on ourselves, each other, and the world.



# L.I.S. Learning Principles

## Our principles of learning

1. We teach for learning of concepts and ideas through the process of guided inquiry, so that students can apply understanding to new areas of study.
2. We teach for learning of skills and competencies through modelling, deconstruction and joint reconstruction, so that students can apply skills independently and practise to achieve mastery.
3. We teach to promote individual critical thinking and research capacity, so that students can explore local and global contexts and develop innovative solutions to the challenges of our time.
4. We teach and model for learning of effective student character traits that align to our values and promote a healthy, happy and meaningful life.
5. We teach learning dispositions and skills to enable students' self-management, for them to be rigorous, responsible and resilient in their learning behaviours.
6. We teach for learning of communicative, collaborative and social skills, to enable students to live and work effectively in their future personal and professional teams.
7. We teach for learning inclusive of all, differentiating learning and using formative and summative assessment to direct feedback and inform growth.



# LIS Certification

## ***What do students graduate from school with?***

At the conclusion of Secondary School, we can award students one of two outcomes: an LIS Leaving Certificate or a NEASC High School Diploma. While the students undertake examinations from Cambridge International Assessment and the International Baccalaureate, the qualifications from these institutions are awarded by them directly to the students. However, when a student graduates from our school what we award them with is either a Leaving Certificate or a High School Diploma.

## ***What is the difference between a HS Diploma and a Leaving Certificate?***

An LIS Leaving Certificate is a recognition that the student has been enrolled in school during Grade 12 and has managed to stay in school (meeting basic requirements) until the end of the year and until Graduation. This Certificate is not a reflection of any specific academic achievement, but recognises a minimum requirement for attendance and participation in school.

A NEASC-accredited High School Diploma is also a Leaving Certificate but it recognises a certain level of academic and holistic attainment. Our criteria for recognition include the number of subjects that need to be undertaken throughout High School (Grades 9-12), certain minimum grade requirements for those subjects, and requirements for attendance in both school and individual lessons. Our criteria are approved by NEASC prior to the undertaking, guaranteeing that the awarding of this Diploma by LIS is automatically recognised by NEASC and by all higher education institutions that accept NEASC High School Diplomas.



# Cambridge International Education

## ***Cambridge Lower Secondary Checkpoints***

During Middle School years (Grades 6-8), students undertake an internal, LIS curriculum that is based on our Learning Principles - built upon the principles of education for the International Baccalaureate organization (IBO) – designed to prepare students most effectively for Cambridge IGCSE and the IB Diploma beyond. In some subjects, the content is loosed based on that of the Cambridge Lower Secondary programmes.

Aligned with these programmes, Cambridge run Checkpoint assessments towards the end of Grade 8, and our students undertake these in English (or EAL), Mathematics, and Global Perspectives. As the name suggests, these are simply a ‘checkpoint’ – a moment to check in on the journey of how the student is doing – and, while teachers will work with the students to ensure they understand the manner and requirements of the assessment, the curriculum and teaching will not be directly designed around preparing students for these assessments.

The results sometimes come in the last week of the school year in June and sometimes in July, so we tend to share and celebrate the results and certificates with students in August or September.



# Cambridge International Education

## ***Cambridge IGCSE***

In Grades 9 and 10, our students undertake the Cambridge International General Certificate in Secondary Education examinations (IGCSE). In modern additional language acquisition subjects (GAL, Spanish, French) these are taken at the end of Grade 9; for all other examinations these occur at the end of Grade 10.

These are external examinations and Cambridge, as the awarding body, awards students results in these assessments by subject (using a grading system of A\*-G).

***It is important to note that, unlike many systems, Cambridge IGCSE is not a diploma with a certain requirement when combining subject outcomes in order to pass or fail the diploma.***

In this sense, it is unlike the IB Diploma and unlike the German Realschulabschluss or results of the Abitur. Each result is a separate credential and any result from grade G and above is a passing grade. In normal circumstances – i.e. for students who are with us for both years of the programme and have a high enough English language level to access the full LIS programme – students will take between 7 and 10 IGCSE subjects. And while a G is a passing grade, as a school between 75% and 85% of all entries result in a grade C or higher.

Students receive their results in mid-August, usually just around the time of the start of Grade 11. While conversations about pathways beyond Grade 10 go on before the examinations, for students who haven't met their desired outcomes more conversations will ensue to be sure that the next steps are the most suitable for every student.



# Conversion to the Realschulabschluss

## ***How do I gain a German Realschulabschluss (RSA)?***

It is important to note that we do not “do” the German system and therefore do not follow their combination of subjects, curriculum hours or outcomes. We follow our system of learning which results in students undertaking some external examinations for Cambridge (and later for IBO).

However, ***our students’ examination credentials automatically allow them to convert their certificates for a German Realschulabschluss (and later a Hochschulzugangsberechtigung) assuming they meet certain criteria.*** This is to say, that there is no requirement that they follow any other kind of programme – the examination outcome is enough to convert at the end of the process.

The requirements for this, to convert from Cambridge IGCSE, are as follows:

- C grade or above in the following subjects:
- Language A
- Language B (or a second Language A)
- A humanities subject (History or Geography)
- An experimental science (Biology, Chemistry, Physics)
- Mathematics

Again, while for students who have been with us throughout Grades 9 and 10, our subject choices are structured so that everyone would meet these requirements and they cannot choose subjects which mean they do not. However, for others, we may suggest other choices in order to best prepare the students for Grades 11 and 12.

After all, while we don’t wish to exclude students from gaining local qualifications and indeed do all we can to ensure they gain access to these, and while students and families will always receive clear, individual counselling if ever their choices and our suggestions make them ineligible for such a qualification, our school does not finish after Grade 10. We endeavour to help every child through to the end of Grade 12 and to gaining a HS Diploma. Very few students ever “cash in” the RSA since they gain a superior qualification after Grade 12 which presupposes completion of the former.



## The Problems of the Realschulabschluss Conversion

### Four issues with using the RSA qualification as a gateway to Grade 11:

1. The State of Saxony has established a conversion from Cambridge IGCSE to the State RSA. There is no actual relationship between those programmes, but the State is motivated by not having an easier pathway to their certification than through the German system. Hence, in practice this is actually quite a challenging way to gain the RSA.
2. There is also no relationship between Cambridge International and the International Baccalaureate, so using one as a gateway to the other (you can take subjects if you get C grades; you can take subjects at Higher Level if you get B grades – both former practices at LIS) doesn't make any sense and is like comparing apples with oranges. The IBDP is an inclusive programme and is designed for students of all abilities to access; the relationship between Higher Level and Standard Level subjects is not as it might seem (students, even the best all-rounders, have to take both) and they are designed so that students would gain the same grade given the additional hours.
3. Crucially, the RSA qualification (which requires 5 C grades in core subjects) is a poor gateway since it doesn't accumulate the performances in those subjects and thus account for better performances in one balancing out weaker performances in another. For example, if you gain a D in IGCSE Mathematics you fail to gain the RSA. However, you can gain a Level 3 in IBDP Mathematics and still gain a very good IB Diploma, even a German HZB. So why would you limit a child's access to the programme for this? Indeed, the student who gains 5 C grades would actually be a far inferior IBDP student than the one who gains 1 A grade, 1 B, 1 C and 2 D's, but the latter wouldn't be allowed onto the programme.
4. The IBDP is a programme for 16-19-year-olds. You only get the examinations taken during that period (three sittings maximum) to gain the outcomes in each different course to build the final Diploma points tally. Whereas Cambridge IGCSE can be taken at any age, at any time. If students are retaking Cambridge examinations to gain the grades to gain a RSA, better to do it after they have tried (and failed) to gain the IBDP (and perhaps the HZB as well – to be explained in the next section), which would trump the RSA requirement if achieved anyway.





## What happens if my child doesn't meet the requirements for the RSA?

If your child doesn't make 5 C grades in the appropriate subjects to qualify for the RSA, ***you don't need to do anything***. You will automatically be contacted by the Principal or Assistant Principal and we will arrange a time for a conversation about possible next steps. These will be done on a case-by-case basis, and may include:

- Continuing as normal into the IB Diploma programme, but recognising in writing that you are aware that your child currently does not have the RSA qualification (and would need to take steps to amend that at a later date after the IB Diploma is completed should they ever need that certificate for work or study in Germany);
- Continuing as normal into the IB Diploma programme, but planning to retake relevant IGCSE examinations the following May / June in order to improve their grades in those subjects and gain the appropriate grades to qualify for the RSA certificate;
- Not continuing into the IB Diploma programme with a view to retaking certain subjects and undertaking more foundational courses in order to get better prepared to start the IB Diploma programme one year later, or to gain the RSA to be ready to leave LIS and start an Ausbildung.

In each case, we will have as many face-to-face meetings as necessary to explain the options and support students and families with these next steps. We will follow up in writing each time, so it is clear that everyone knows what has been explained, what qualifications are currently achieved and absent, and what next steps are.

As we move forward with developing our different pathways and opportunities for students to gain a HS Diploma, in the future students will select subjects that may neither qualify them for a German HZB (to be explained later) nor an IB Diploma (i.e. different IB courses are undertaken but not in combinations that allow for a full Diploma). Again, in these cases this will be recommended if we feel it is best for the individual students, but all will be explained and clarified in writing.



# International Baccalaureate Diploma

## ***How are grades awarded?***

- Unlike Cambridge IGCSE, the IB Diploma represents a combination of subjects considered together. While fuller details are available in the relevant Course Guides, essentially students study six subjects from six different groups / areas of knowledge as well as meeting core requirements in the Theory of Knowledge, the Extended Essay, and CAS (Creativity, Activity, Service);
- In total, students can gain a maximum of 45 points (7 for each academic subject and up to three bonus points for the Core). They need to gain 24 points to achieve the Diploma (assuming other requirements such as a minimum number of points for Higher Level subjects) are met.

## ***What is the value of an IB Diploma?***

- Put simply, with an IB Diploma almost all doors are open to students globally for higher education. Admissions Officers from the very best institutions around the world are open about how they much prefer IBDP students since they are best prepared for the rigours and challenges of higher education and more independent learning;
- For many countries, the admission is conditional on the final points' total. For others, it is about the all-round application letter and process. All institutions are different and have different requirements, hence our Beyond LIS guidance programme;
- Even without a full Diploma, it is possible to get into some universities and foundation programmes with the grades gained in individual subjects. Take a look, for example, at [this tool used by some UK universities](#) to measure the value of results in individual subjects even without the full Diploma;
- To gain admission to German State higher education, and achieve the German HZB certificate, students must gain the full Diploma and meet certain other requirements (explained on the next page).
- Once the IBDP results come out in July, our team (IB Coordinator, Principal, Beyond LIS) remain available to counsel students and families on next steps whatever the results.



## Conversion to the Hochschulzugangsberechtigung

### ***What is required to gain a HZB?***

In order to qualify for a *Hochschulzugangsberechtigung* (HZB), the following criteria needs to be met:

- ✓ A study of a first and a second language;
- ✓ If a second language is studied (i.e. the student is not studying two Language A courses), the Language B must be at Higher Level;
- ✓ Either mathematics or a natural or experimental science must be studied at Higher Level (note, this is not a requirement of IBO, but is a requirement for the HZB);
- ✓ Note, the Environmental Systems & Societies course (a Group 3 & Group 4 hybrid course) is not HZB-recognised. This subject is currently not offered at LIS.
- ✓ No more than one Level 3, and no grade lower than Level 3;
- ✓ All courses must be studied for two years consecutively.

### ***Is it conditional or automatic?***

There is an agreement with the KMK that recognises the IB Diploma results with a conversion to a German Abitur.

As long as the criteria above are met and the paperwork is submitted in good time, this conversion occurs for all students who choose to fulfil it.

The school assists with the paperwork for this certificate during Grade 12 and any student who thinks they may want this certificate at some point in the future – even if they don't immediately plan to study in Germany – should take advantage of this opportunity.

*Please note: we do not do the German Abitur and so the requirements for our students to gain the HZB are not the same as those in German schools. Our students undertake the IB Diploma and this automatically converts (using a fair conversion of numbers) to a numbered Abitur and HZB.*

More information about the agreement between IB and KMK can be found [here](#).

