United Christian College (Kowloon East)
滙基書院（東九龍）

OUR NLC JOURNEY



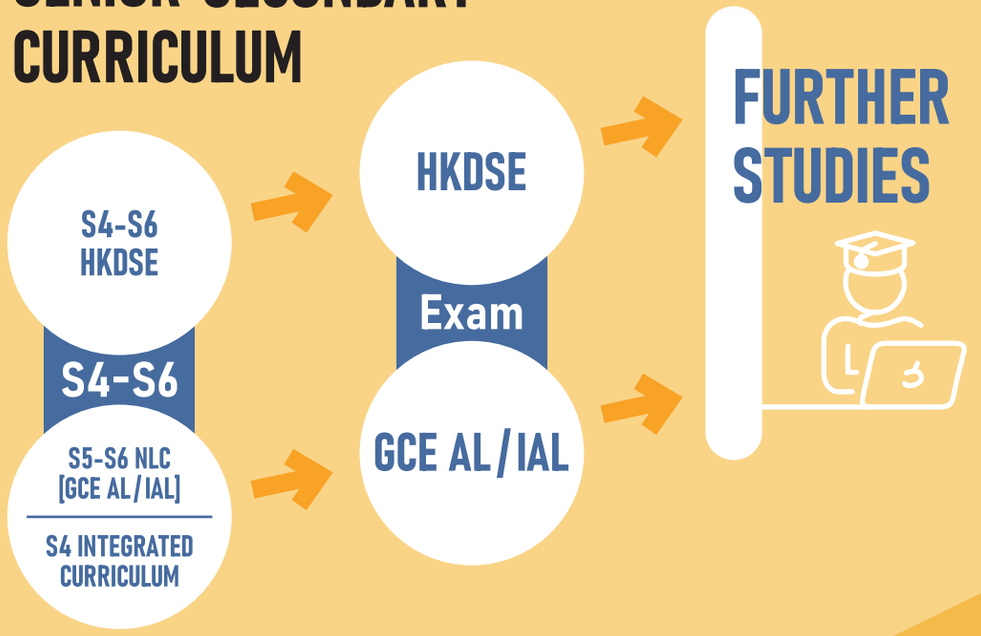


DR. SAMUEL CHENG KIN TAK
PRINCIPAL

To cater to the diverse learning needs and further study needs of our students, Non-Local Curriculum (NLC) was launched in September 2019, offering one additional curriculum for our Secondary Five and Six students. The Non-Local Curriculum, which is based mainly on the International Advanced Levels (IAL) offered by Edexcel, serves as an alternative one that allows students to specialize further in elective subjects of their choice.

It is my sincere hope that through the sharing of different 'travellers' and 'planners' of our NLC journey, you can gain a better understanding of the 'Different Sky of Learning' at UCCKE.

SENIOR SECONDARY CURRICULUM



Sherman MA
(Class of 2024)

Sherman is currently a year 3 student studying Dentistry at The University of Hong Kong

Studying the IAL curriculum has been a transformative experience in my academic journey, igniting a passion for scientific inquiry that extends far beyond the classroom. It has deepened my interest in science, motivating me to explore specific topics in greater detail and broaden my understanding. The comprehensive syllabus of IAL covers subjects that are highly relevant to university-level studies, helping me bridge the gap between secondary school and higher education. One of the strengths of the IAL curricula is the spiral approach, where topics are revisited and expanded upon at increasing levels of complexity over the course of the program. This design has allowed me to build on my prior knowledge step by step, making it easier for me to grasp more advanced and challenging concepts as I progress.

As someone focusing exclusively on science subjects, I have been able to dedicate my time and energy to what truly captivates me. This focus has not only enhanced my engagement but also enabled me to manage my revision time more effectively. Overall, the IAL program has been instrumental in shaping my academic path and nurturing my aspirations to pursue a career in healthcare sciences.



Davin WONG
(Class of 2025)

Davin is currently a year 2 student studying Computing (Artificial Intelligence and Machine Learning) at Imperial College London

The Non-Local Curriculum offered by UCCKE was quite a different experience both academically and physically. I enjoyed the deeper curriculum which allowed me to formulate a deeper understanding of each scientific topic, for which my teachers were willing to discuss beyond the syllabus. I need to emphasise that I found the learning process in the NLC period to be quite fun because it prioritises the understanding of theory, so that I can go on to form various informed opinions on the things I learnt. The flexible subject and exam taking system also allowed me to self-study during school hours, allowing me to explore my own interests in computer science, which were outside the curriculum.

Although there are no SBAs in NLC, we still had laboratory sessions every week which tested our patience and experimental rigour. In mathematics, the teachers gave us mountains of exercises to do. With no MC questions, the papers aimed to test application of technique and not pure deduction, and this required lots of practice. However, I saw all of these as challenges to be overcome. Since there are fewer complex questions than in HKDSE, students can focus on surface level application of different techniques instead. At that point, it's just a battle of mental fortitude to master every equation and understand how to apply it. This framework was suitable for me and I found my pace of learning quite easily.

I initially thought of NLC as a side option and DSE as the main path within UCCKE, so that there would be less support for students. However, there are many dedicated teachers and staff who have taught NLC classes for many years and are experienced with the IGCSE and IAL public exam system. Students will feel just as comfortable and at home in the NLC stream, and exams and university applications will come along easily with professional guidance from teachers, who will help out with UCAS and also non-JUPAS applications, through which many of my classmates applied and entered Hong Kong universities.

FURTHER STUDIES SUPPORT

Students taking this curriculum can further their studies in Hong Kong or overseas. Opportunities to understand and network with different universities and academic staff are abound. Activities like seminars, consultation sessions, subject taster, admission talks, university fairs are organized to help students explore disciplines and programs they are interested in. Sufficient individual support is offered to students when applying for both local and overseas universities.



GRADUATES' DESTINATION

Hong Kong

Australia & Canada

The University of Queensland

The University of New South Wales

Monash University

Western Sydney University

University of Toronto Mississauga

University of Calgary

Major

- AI & Computing
- Architecture
- Biochemistry
- Biomedical Science
- Business & Law
- Dental Surgery
- Engineering
- Fine Arts
- Human Nutrition
- Mathematics
- Medicine
- Nursing
- Occupational Therapy
- Optometry
- Physics
- Psychology
- Psysiotherapy
- Radiography
- Science
- Urban Planning & Design

UK

Imperial College London

King's College London

Newcastle University

The University of Leicester

The University of Liverpool

The University of Warwick

The University of Edinburgh

University College London

University of Bath

Parent of Davin WONG (Class of 2025)

A Journey of Growth: How the Non-Local Curriculum at KE Empowered My Son

The HKDSE is Hong Kong's most familiar academic path, yet it is not the only option. Popular alternatives include the International Baccalaureate (IB) and International Advanced Levels (IAL). I recall an informational talk at KE where our Principal, Dr. Cheng, explained the school's decision to offer IAL over IB. As IB shares similarities with the DSE, he envisioned the school's non-local curriculum (NLC) as a distinct alternative pathway for students who excel through deep, focused study.

With an older daughter from an IB school, I confirm the systems differ significantly. Different children thrive under different models based on their learning styles and strengths. We chose IAL for our son Davin as it best suited his potential.

Choosing the Right Path: IAL vs. DSE

The differences are substantial. Teachers at an NLC briefing explained that DSE delves deeply into narrow topics, while IAL offers broader knowledge. Assessments differ too: IAL features modular exams across two to three exam windows, whereas DSE requires all papers in one high-stakes sitting, creating intense pressure.

Fostering Independence and Maturity

Over three years, Davin benefited greatly. The IAL pathway built him into an independent learner who managed his own IGCSE and IAL exam registrations and handled his UK UCAS and local non-JUPAS university applications. Watching him manage these milestones allowed me to see him mature into a responsible young man who truly takes ownership of his own future.

A Heartfelt Note of Gratitude

Today, Davin is thriving at his dream university, studying his passion. None of this would have happened without KE's supportive community. I extend my deepest gratitude to the school and teachers for their patience, dedication, and



CURRICULUM & SUBJECTS OFFERED

S.4 INTEGRATED CURRICULUM	
SCIENCE	**BUSINESS & HUMANITIES**
CORE SUBJECTS	○ Citizenship and Social Development ○ Chinese Language ○ English Language ○ Mathematics
Science • Physics • Chemistry • Biology	**Business & Humanities** • Economics • Business • Geography
Bible, Physical Education, OLE (Life Education), Digital Literacy	

edexcel

IAL Subject Specifications

Mr. TSE Man Chi
(Faculty Head of Science, Assessment & Administration Coordinator)

When comparing the local and non-local Physics curriculum, there are some obvious differences in terms of their curriculum structure, teaching, learning and assessment approach.

Curriculum-wise, both streams vary in their breadth and depth of the content taught. In HKDSE, the syllabus is condensed, yet it is broad at the same time, which makes it hard for both teaching and learning as one single topic (e.g. momentum) may be covered in a month's time. In contrast, the IAL Physics curriculum comes in a spiral structure, with similar topics covered and revisited each year in a progressive manner that builds upon prior knowledge. Students are exposed to a number of topics in Physics in their Integrated Curriculum in S.4, which serve as a bridge to IAL.





Once students enter the NLC stream, they will experience a spiral curriculum, in which a topic will be explored by various science subjects, while the complexity and coverage becomes deeper. For instance, in S.5 Chemistry, "Applications of Mass Spectrometer" is introduced. Then in S.6 Physics, students learn further about the "Working Principles of Mass Spectrometer." Such a spiral curriculum strengthens students' learning and facilitates their preparation for their tertiary studies in the science field. In addition, while the HKDSE places emphasis on students' procedural knowledge, the IAL training in practical skills for science experimentation focuses on data analysis such as the accuracy, precision, the differences in data, and the whys. Students in the NLC stream also enjoy more flexibility for their assessment due to the modular approach adopted by IAL. Instead of taking all 6 units at the end of S.6, they will be taking Unit 1, 2, 3 in S.5 and then Unit 4, 5, 6 in S.6.

With the above curriculum and assessment designs, they can gain a more solid scientific foundation and training and be better equipped for their university study.

Uniqua LI
(Class of 2025)

Uniqua is currently a year 2 student studying Biotechnology and Business at HKUST

Transitioning from the IAL curriculum to university studies has been a smooth experience for me. IAL science specifications are designed for students to learn modular topics in a spiral approach, with deep alignment to fundamental courses in university. This leads to the building up of a strong academic foundation and allows students to bridge the gap between secondary schools and university levels.

Moreover, the curriculum's flexibility has offered me time to explore my interests and further identify my true passion. Not only could I join research programmes (e.g. PolyU Junior Researcher Mentoring Programme and iGEM competition), I could also participate in volunteer experiences and work internships. All of these experiences have allowed me to apply theoretical concepts I learnt in IAL curriculum to real-world challenges, shaping my career path and motivating me to study my current university programme.

The IAL curriculum was definitely the turning point in my journey. It offers far more than equipment with extensive knowledge or guidance towards a degree; it offers the vital space to identify your true passion, so to pursue dreams that once seemed impossible.



S.5 & S.6
NON-LOCAL CURRICULUM

COMPULSORY SUBJECTS

- Chinese Language
- English Language
- Bible
- Physical Education

IAL SUBJECTS

- Exam Board: edexcel
- Student can take 3-4 IAL subjects

Science

- IAL Physics
- IAL Chemistry
- IAL Biology
- IAL Mathematics

Business & Humanities

- IAL Mathematics
- IAL Economics
- IAL Business
- IAL Geography



Mr. CHANG Yu Hsiang
(Faculty Head of Business)

I am delighted to introduce our Non-Local Curriculum (NLC) business and humanities stream, featuring the Pearson Edexcel International Advanced Level (IAL) in Business, Economics, and Geography.

A Global, Interconnected Approach

While local curricula traditionally emphasize deep, specialized mastery of specific topics within a linear framework, the IAL offers a distinct pedagogical alternative. It provides a broader, more globally oriented scope of knowledge. Rather than drilling intensely into isolated concepts, the IAL focuses heavily on the "big picture" and how different systems interact.

Subject Synergy

This broad focus creates remarkable synergy across our chosen subjects, as students learn to seamlessly synthesize their knowledge:

- ***Economics** explores macro-forces, from global markets to international development and inequality.*
- ***Business** applies these economic frameworks to real-world corporate strategy, looking holistically at how global enterprises operate.*
- ***Geography** grounds this commercial knowledge spatially, investigating global superpowers, resource management, and environmental challenges.*

Because the IAL utilizes a synoptic assessment model, students are explicitly trained to connect these discipline — for example, analyzing how geopolitical climate policies (Geography) impact macro-trends (Economics) and drive corporate decision-making (Business).

The Modular Advantage

The IAL also offers a different assessment rhythm. Rather than culminating in a single, comprehensive exam at the end of S.6, it uses a modular structure (completing IAS units in S.5 and IA2 units in S.6). This allows students to build their qualifications progressively and manage their academic workload steadily over two years.

Keys to Success & Suitability

Success in the IAL requires strong analytical and evaluative skills. Assessments rely heavily on data-response interpretation and extended essay writing based on complex, real-world case studies. Therefore, this stream is highly suited for independent learners with strong English proficiency who enjoy exploring global themes, formulating well-reasoned arguments, and thriving in a progressive assessment environment.

Kingson NG
(Class of 2025)

Kingson is currently a year 2 student studying Physics at Imperial College

*Studying the IAL curriculum has been one of the most meaningful experiences in my academic journey. The well-structured curriculum, together with the school's carefully organised notes, learning materials and past paper practices, gave me a strong foundation in Mathematics, Further Mathematics (self-study), Physics and Chemistry, enabling me to achieve 4A*s in the IAL examinations. Beyond academics, my teachers devoted tremendous effort to mentoring my personal statement, providing UCAS guidance, and closely supporting my application process, which ultimately helped me receive an offer. The school also encouraged me to participate in enrichment opportunities such as the Physics Enhancement Programme and the Hong Kong Young Physicists' Tournament, allowing me to deepen my interest in physics while developing problem-solving, teamwork and communication skills. More importantly, the encouragement and care from my teachers nurtured confidence, resilience, discipline, empathy and strong values that continue to guide me today. I will always be grateful for their unwavering support, which has shaped not only my academic achievements but also the person I aspire to become.*

Mr. Roparz FONG
(English Teacher, Form Teacher)

The Non-Local Curriculum serves as a bridge to higher education by equipping Secondary 5 students with the skills to analyze academic literature and craft formal essays. Developing proficiency in academic reading and writing is a gradual process that involves expanding vocabulary, exploring diverse topics, and refining overall communication skills. By exploring a diverse range of local and global issues, students develop the critical thinking skills necessary to analyze multiple perspectives — a vital asset for university interviews and independent research papers.

In Secondary 6, the research paper serves as a taster and a practical simulation of university assignments and it is a good process for them to investigate their own unique research questions. Complementing their academic studies, students receive comprehensive training in career readiness, including the drafting of personal statements, cover letters and resumes. These exercises, paired with mock interview sessions, serve as an essential introduction to professional etiquette and business communication.

By graduation, students will have gained various forms of training in written and oral communication skills, complemented with exposure to diverse academic and global topics.



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UCCKE ifferent SKY OF LEARNING

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