



## GCSEs, IGCSEs and Functional Skills



with

Learn Laugh Play

[www.llplearningspace.co.uk](http://www.llplearningspace.co.uk)

# GCSEs with Learn Laugh Play

A guide for home-educating families

## What Are GCSEs?

GCSEs (General Certificate of Secondary Education) are qualifications usually taken between ages 14–16, but they can be sat at any time as an external (private) candidate, and are offered in the summer term each year, with some subjects also available in an autumn exam series.

Each GCSE usually involves sitting 1–3 papers within the same exam series, and all papers are included in the cost of a single exam entry. If needed, exams can also be retaken in a future exam series, giving students another opportunity to improve their grade.

GCSEs and IGCSEs do not all need to be sat in the same year. You can choose to focus on certain subjects and take them over a number of years, and at different exam sittings—this is a real benefit of home education, as it allows students to avoid the pressure of taking multiple exams at the same time.

GCSEs are optional, but are often useful for college entry, apprenticeships or future opportunities. It is really important that you consider what courses and exams you take depending on what your learner wants to do next. Many places accept Functional Skills instead of GCSEs, but others do not, so it is always worth checking this in advance. At Learn Laugh Play, we support families in preparing for GCSEs, IGCSEs and Functional Skills qualifications in a flexible, home-ed friendly way.

## GCSE vs IGCSE vs Functional Skills

### GCSEs

- The most commonly recognised UK qualification and the option used in most mainstream schools
- Often required for college and further education
- Usually include coursework or specific exam formats depending on the subject

### IGCSEs

- Very similar to GCSEs, but often more flexible for home education
- Typically assessed through final exams only, with less or no coursework
- Widely accepted by colleges and employers

IGCSEs were set up for International Schools to get rid of the need for coursework. There is no difference in terms of recognition of qualification between GCSEs and IGCSEs.

### Functional Skills

- Focus on practical English and Maths, offering a more practical and real-world approach to learning
- Are available throughout the year and can sometimes be taken at home
- Can be a lower-pressure pathway for some learners
- Individual papers can be retaken if not passed
- Sometimes accepted instead of GCSEs, but not always

This pathway can be a lower-pressure option, helping learners build confidence while applying skills in everyday situations, and remember it is not compulsory to take exams if they are not the right choice for your child.

## How Learn Laugh Play Supports GCSE Students

- Clear, structured teaching aligned to GCSE and IGCSE exam specifications
- Live online lessons with experienced, engaging tutors
- Supportive groups that are smaller than our standard class groups
- Lesson recordings available the evening of the live lesson, with 2 weeks to watch back
- Flexible options, including some complete recorded courses if recordings suit your child better
- A friendly learning community where students feel supported and confident

## Booking and Taking Exams

One of the key differences with home education is that you arrange the exams yourself, but once you've done it once, the process becomes much easier.

There are a number of exam board options, as well as the type of qualification chosen. At Learn Laugh Play, we have selected exam boards that we feel are the most straightforward for home-educated learners.

For some subjects, such as English, we offer multiple options including Cambridge, Edexcel and AQA, which differ in structure and assessment style. For Maths, we also offer Higher and Foundation levels, as well as both GCSE and IGCSE options.

It is therefore worth looking at each exam board specification to see which approach may suit your learner best.

We are also very happy to talk this through with you if you are unsure.

## How Exams Work with LLP

Learn Laugh Play provides teaching, structure, and ongoing support, while parents are responsible for booking exams, choosing an exam centre, and ensuring exam readiness.

We guide students through exam technique and preparation every step of the way, and you can choose to sit exams at any centre that accepts private candidates.

After booking, all you need to do is choose your subjects, view and select lesson times, and start anytime, as we offer a rolling curriculum. Just make sure you give yourself enough time to cover the full curriculum, as well as time for revision and exam preparation before sitting the exams.

## Costs

- Exam entry: £150–£300 per subject (paid to the exam centre)
- Resources: £10–£30 (Learn Laugh Play provide resources to go with their lessons but many parents want to buy additional resources such as textbooks and our teachers make recommendations)
- Lessons with Learn Laugh Play £6 per session over 1–2 years depending on pace

## Common Concerns

### Which qualification should they be taking?

You can choose what works best for your learner and mix GCSEs, IGCSEs and Functional Skills. It is a good idea to look at possible courses at your local college and see what your child will need in order to do the courses they are interested in. It is also a good idea to speak to the college as they may have slightly more lenient rules for home educated children.

### What if I can't find an exam centre?

There are many options including schools, tuition centres, home ed hubs, and specialist providers.

### What if my child isn't ready?

You can take exams when your learner is ready. It is important to get the Key Stage 3 building blocks of learning, which we cover in our "Focus on..." classes before starting GCSE level study.

### What if exams feel too stressful?

You can reduce pressure and remember exams are not compulsory. It is a good idea to stagger qualifications so that not all exams are sat in one year.

GCSEs and IGCSEs don't have to feel overwhelming. With the right support, home-educated students can succeed and enjoy the process. It is really important to support your child and make sure they are not overwhelmed.

It is important that children understand that although qualifications are a part of life, they are not the most important thing, and their wellbeing and happiness matters too!

## Current GCSE level courses available at LLP

Please see next 2 pages for full chart detailing the syllabus, exam codes and length of each of our courses.

If you need any further help with deciding what is best for your child, drop us an email at:

**[hello@learnlaughplay.co.uk](mailto:hello@learnlaughplay.co.uk)**

Subject	Syllabus	Exam Codes	Length of Study with LLP
English Language IGCSE	Cambridge	0990 (1-9) or 0500 (A-G)	1 year
English Language IGCSE	Edexcel	4EA1 (Spec A)	2 years
English Language GCSE	AQA	8700	1 or 2 years
English Literature IGCSE	Edexcel	4ET1	1 or 2 years
English Literature GCSE	AQA	8702	1 or 2 years
Functional Skills English Level 2	Edexcel		1 year
Maths GCSE- Foundation Level (1-5)	Edexcel	1MA1	1 year
Maths GCSE – Higher Level (5-9)	Edexcel	1MA1	1 year
GCSE Statistics	Edexcel	1ST0/1H	1 year
Functional Skills Maths Level 2	Edexcel		1 year
IGCSE Maths Foundation	Edexcel	4MA1	1 year
IGCSE Maths – Higher	Edexcel	4MA1/H	1 year

Double Science IGCSE	Edexcel	4SD0	2 years
Human Biology IGCSE	Edexcel	4HB1	2 years
Astronomy GCSE	Edexcel	1AS0	2 years
History IGCSE	Edexcel	4HI1	1 or 2 years
Classical Civilization	OCR	J199: Option B- Myth and religion plus Roman city life	1 or 2 years
Religious Studies GCSE	AQA	8062	2 years
Geography IGCSE	Cambridge	0976	2 years
French GCSE	AQA	8652	2 years (split into year groups)
Spanish GCSE	AQA	8692	2 years (split into year groups)
Business Studies GCSE	AQA	8132	2 years
Sociology GCSE	AQA	8192	1 year
Psychology GCSE	AQA	8182	1 year
LAMDA	Grades 1 – 8		1 or 2 Years
Biology IGCSE	Edexcel	4BI1	2 years
Environmental Management IGCSE	Cambridge	0680	2 years

