

# A Student's Guide to the GCSE in Applied Information And Communication Technology (Double Award)



## What is a GCSE in Applied ICT?

A GCSE in Applied ICT is a nationally recognised work-related qualification designed to provide you with a choice of routes into further education or employment. It is made up of three units.

## What is a Double Award?

A double award is a qualification equal to two GCSEs - it is twice the size of most GCSEs.

## What do I need to know or be able to do before taking the GCSE in Applied ICT?

You do not need to have studied information and communication technology before starting the GCSE. It is important that you have a lively and enquiring mind, an interest in information and communication technology, a willingness to explore new ideas and an ability to communicate your ideas effectively.

## Why should I choose this course?

### You will:

- gain an understanding of software and hardware and their use within organisations and in society
- develop skills and knowledge in the application and use of ICT based systems and solutions
- have an opportunity to apply learning in a practical and realistic way
- follow a programme of study that enables progression to further courses and employment in ICT
- develop Key Skills which are highly valued by employers and further education
- gain confidence by developing independent learning skills.

## Who is the GCSE in Applied ICT for?

### This course will appeal to you if you:

- have a keen interest in Information and Communication Technology
- enjoy studying a subject that is relevant to your own life and experience
- want to find out more about how ICT tools, applications and systems are used by organisations
- are interested in developing an understanding of how ICT affects individuals, groups, families, organisations and wider society
- want to study a course that is active and enjoyable
- want to move on to a related career or further education
- wish to build up a qualification by studying separate units

## The structure of the GCSE in Applied ICT

### Unit 1: ICT Tools and Applications

In this unit you will develop business documents and learn how to use a variety of ICT applications such as word processing, spreadsheets, databases, presentation and multimedia software. You will need to understand file management and standard ways of working and how to use ICT in a legal and secure way. You will need to access the Internet and communicate using e-mail.

### Unit 2: ICT Systems and Organisations

You will investigate how ICT components and systems meet the needs of organisations. You will gain practical experience of how ICT systems are designed and implemented.

### Unit 3: ICT and Society

In this unit you will learn how ICT affects everyday life and society. You will find out the meaning of terms such as ISDN, ASDL, SMS and WAP. You will discover how modern society uses the new technologies such as Internet, digital broadcasting and DVD.

## How is it graded?

A GCSE Applied ICT is a double award so is awarded two grades. The grades will be the summary of your results for each of the three grades for each unit. These will be reported as A\*A\* through to GG depending on how well you have done in each of your three units.

## What assessments will I do?

During the course you will carry out a number of assignments based on Units 2 and 3. In Unit 2 you need to design and build a database that meets the needs of a business. For example, you could look at a local business such as a video shop.

After completing your assignment your teacher will mark your work. During your course you will build up a folder (portfolio) containing your work for Units 2 and 3. This portfolio will count towards your final grade.

As part of your course you will take a computer based exam which will allow you to show the skills you have learned in Unit 1. The exam is set and marked by Edexcel. The mark for your exam will also count towards your final grade.

## Can I develop my full range of skills by doing this course?

As well as covering aspects of information and communication technology, you will also develop your Key Skills in the areas of:

- Communication
- Application of Number
- Information Technology
- Problem solving
- Working with others
- Improving own learning and performance

If you take part in a discussion or role play, for example, you will develop your **Communication** Key Skill, as will reports that you write as part of your course. Collecting and analysing information is part of the **Application of Number** Key Skill.

Your GCSE in Applied ICT will give you exemption from the Key Skill in **Information Technology**. Achieving a grade A\*A\* to CC in your GCSE in Applied ICT will give you credit for the Information Technology Key Skill at level 2 and a grade DD to GG will give you credit at level 1.

## What courses or employment can I progress to at the end of my course?

Students gaining a GCSE in Applied ICT will have access to a range of career and further education opportunities. You will use a variety of skills throughout the course, including collecting, interpreting data, communicating your findings in different ways, and identifying and developing the links between different parts of the subject. These skills are in great demand and are recognised and highly valued by employers and colleges. The options open to you depend on the results achieved and your own interests, your teacher will be able to help you decide on the next step.

If you wish to continue studying ICT in a vocational context, you may consider a Vocational A level in ICT, or one of the related BTEC National courses such as IT Practitioner or Telecommunications. Otherwise, you may wish to study an Advanced Subsidiary or Advanced GCE in Computing or ICT. You can continue your studies in Higher Education on either a BTEC Higher National or degree. There are a large variety of higher education courses that are based around computing, communications and IT.

Alternatively, a GCSE in Applied ICT is an ideal qualification if you wish to go straight into employment. This is because ICT is a key part of business and industry today. Some areas of employment have further learning opportunities within them, for example a Modern Apprenticeship

**Further details are available from your school or college**