

# Benchmarking Further Selected Subjects of the Certificate of Nile International Secondary Education (CNISE)



**UK NARIC has found the CNISE Level 2 (L2) Chemistry, Economics, English and Physics comparable to GCE AS Level standard, and CNISE Level 3 (L3) Chemistry comparable to GCE A Level standard**

## Context and scope

The Certificate of Nile International Secondary Education (CNISE) is a three-year bilingual English-Arabic upper secondary school qualification currently taught in five purpose-built schools across Egypt.

Developed by Cambridge International Examinations in collaboration with the Education Development Fund in Egypt, and recognised by the national Ministry of Education<sup>1</sup> the qualification aims to combine Egyptian and international curriculum standards and international educational practice. In doing so, the qualification has been designed to prepare students for undergraduate study or employment both nationally and globally.

<sup>1</sup> Ministry of Education, Egypt (2016) *Ministerial Decision No. 121 dated 2<sup>nd</sup> April 2016 regarding Nile Egyptian Schools.*

In July 2016, UK NARIC completed an initial study that found the L2 Biology and Mathematics comparable to GCE AS Level standard, while the L3 Biology and Mathematics were found comparable to GCE A Level standard in the context of the UK education system.

A second study completed in June 2017 reviewing four subjects of the CNISE, L2 Chemistry; Economics; Physics and English and L3 Chemistry in order to determine their comparability in the context of the UK education system.

## Overview of the CNISE

The CNISE comprises study and assessment at three levels, Levels 1, 2 and 3 (referred to as L1, L2 and L3 respectively). The first cohort of the CNISE sat the L1 examinations in 2015. The first L2 examinations took place in 2016, and the first L3 examinations in 2017.

## Content and teaching

As detailed in the Egyptian Minister of Education and Technical Education's Ministerial Decree of April 2016 the CNISE comprises the following core and optional subjects (additional subjects/levels offered by CNISE are included in italics) with further subjects at all three levels currently under development:

Compulsory	
Internally assessed subjects	CNISE L1
Arts	Mathematics
Music	Arabic
PE	English
Optional CNISE	
Business Studies (L1)	Chemistry (L1, L2, L3)
Global Perspectives (L1)	ICT (L1, L2)
Sociology & Psychology (L1)	Entrepreneurship & Innovation (L2)
Economics (L2)	History (L1, L2)
<i>English (L2)</i>	Geography (L1, L2)
<i>Accounting (L2)</i>	Physics (L1, L2, L3)
<i>Art &amp; Design (L2)</i>	Biology (L1, L2, L3)
	Mathematics (L2, L3)

## Assessment and Grading

The CNISE L2 programmes in Chemistry, Economics and Physics are assessed through written examination, with two exams taken; and for L3 Chemistry a further two exams are taken. All exam papers are two hours long with the exception of L2 Economics which are both one hour and 45 minutes long.

The CNISE L2 English is assessed through three written examinations (one hour 30 minutes for the reading examination and writing examination; 35 minutes for the listening examination and 18-19 minutes for the speaking/listening examination with two students).

Individual subjects will be awarded a letter grade, A\*-E where E represents the lowest passing grade.

## Key findings

The CNISE L2/L3 Biology and Mathematics, L2 Economics, English, Chemistry and Physics, and L3 Chemistry combine strong subject content, broadly comparable in breadth and depth to counterpart programmes offered at GCE AS and A Level respectively; with the development of higher order thinking and academic study skills requisite for higher education study internationally.

The supporting CNISE Teacher Guides promote content mastery, cross-curricular linkages and real-world application of the curriculum through student-centred teaching strategies and activities designed to develop students' communicative and collaborative skills through group work, along with their ability to think, reason and problem-solve independently.

Assessment objectives for the selected CNISE programmes demonstrate clear similarity with those prescribed for the GCE AS and A Level, seeking to assess a comparable range and level of knowledge, skills and competencies.

The CNISE assessment is well designed to ensure a sound evaluation of the programme content, testing across the core subject curriculum; and of students' achievement against the assessment objectives. All papers are similarly designed to allow reliable differentiation between students at higher, middle and lower levels of achievement.

As the overall CNISE qualification aims to develop bilingual English-Arabic students, it is important to highlight that a particular strength of the CNISE L2/L3 programmes reviewed is that the examinations employ comparable wording in the questions as the GCE AS and A Level papers, with no linguistic resources provided to CNISE students within the examinations. The examinations therefore provide an assessment not only of the students' subject-specific knowledge and skills, but also of their English language comprehension skills.

## Methodology

Based on UK NARIC's well-established methodology for credential evaluation, this independent evaluation and benchmarking study comprised a detailed review of the CNISE subjects in terms of:

- Entry requirements
- Duration, including recommended guided learning hours
- Content and structure
- Modes of learning and assessment
- Learning outcomes and assessment objectives
- Associated outcomes.

This involved a desk-based comparative review of the Curriculum Framework, teaching guides, test specifications and specimen exam papers for both subjects with specifications and assessment materials for GCE AS/A Level Chemistry, Economics, Physics and French (study of second language) from a UK exam board.