



ZIAUDDIN UNIVERSITY
EXAMINATION BOARD

HSSC A English Syllabus



For exams in 2026 & onwards

INTRODUCTION TO ZUEB

The Ziauddin University Examination Board (ZUEB) serves as both an awarding authority and a solution-oriented educational organization committed to maintaining the highest standards of academic excellence. Guided by its core principles of excellence, integrity, and innovation, ZUEB strives to strengthen the educational landscape by fostering meaningful intellectual growth in alignment with international academic standards. Established through Government Gazette No. XLI on June 6th, 2018, ZUEB ensures quality assurance, global benchmarking, and curriculum alignment within Pakistan's examination system. The Board also oversees student appeals, regulates assessments, and reviews academic policies to uphold consistency, fairness, and high-quality educational practices.

WHY CHOOSE HSSC-A AT ZUEB?

The HSSC-A (Higher Secondary School Certificate Advance) program offered by the Ziauddin University Examination Board (ZUEB) is specifically designed for students transitioning from international educational backgrounds. This program provides a structured, academically sound, and affordable pathway that enables learners to integrate smoothly into Pakistan's national education system.

HSSC-A supports students in completing compulsory national subjects such as Urdu, Islamiyat, Pakistan Studies, or Sindhi while maintaining academic integrity and offering flexible learning options. ZUEB ensures that financial challenges or curriculum transitions do not hinder student progress. Serving as an academic bridge between prior learning and future educational goals, HSSC-A is recognized as a trusted and reliable choice for higher education in Pakistan.

HSSC-ADVANCE ENGLISH

HSSC–Advance English at ZUEB is designed to develop strong communication skills through a structured, skill-based curriculum. The course provides learners with a deep understanding of advanced English language competencies, focusing on comprehension, academic and professional writing, grammar, vocabulary development, and analytical skills. It aims to strengthen students' ability to read critically, write effectively, and communicate confidently in both academic and professional contexts.

Aligned with national and international standards, the programme ensures that learners achieve the level of language proficiency required for higher studies and global engagement. In line with ZUEB's commitment to academic excellence, HSSC–Advance English equips students with essential skills for interpretation, expression, and critical analysis across a wide range of text types and communicative situations. The course is particularly beneficial for students aspiring to pursue higher education in social sciences, business, media, law, and related fields, as it enhances critical thinking, structured writing, and purposeful communication.

Whether preparing for university admission, competitive examinations, or future academic pathways, HSSC–Advance English ensures that learners are academically prepared, nationally aligned, and supported through a flexible, student-centred learning approach.

INTERNATIONAL AS AND A2 LEVEL ENGLISH LANGUAGE SYLLABUS

COURSE OVERVIEW

This International AS and A2 Level English Language qualification is designed for advanced learners seeking to demonstrate superior communication skills in English at B2-C1 proficiency levels. The programme develops sophisticated competency across four essential language skills, enhanced vocabulary range, and advanced grammatical accuracy while fostering critical thinking, analytical capabilities, and academic discourse proficiency.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

Students will develop the ability to:

- Communicate with precision and sophistication in spoken and written English for complex purposes and diverse audiences
- Analyse and evaluate challenging texts with critical insight, nuanced understanding, and academic rigour
- Listen actively to complex spoken discourse and extract both explicit and implicit meanings
- Express complex ideas fluently using advanced grammar, extensive vocabulary, and appropriate register
- Demonstrate mastery of advanced vocabulary and grammatical structures in context
- Apply metalinguistic awareness to enhance communication effectiveness

KEY FEATURES

- **Duration:** 180 guided learning hours per level (AS: 180 hours; A2: additional 180 hours)
- **AS Level Assessment:** 2 papers (Paper 1 and Paper 2)
- **A2 Level Assessment:** 2 papers (Paper 3 and Paper 4)
- **Full A Level:** AS Level + A2 Level (4 papers total)
- **Proficiency Level:** AS Level (B2); A2 Level (B2-C1) (CEFR)
- **Mode:** Centre-based delivery with independent study components

THEORETICAL FOUNDATION

EDUCATIONAL PHILOSOPHY

This qualification builds upon **Communicative Language Teaching (CLT)** principles enhanced with advanced academic discourse frameworks. The approach positions sophisticated interaction as both the means and ultimate goal of advanced language study, emphasising the development of students' communicative and academic competence through meaningful engagement with complex, authentic language use contexts.

Core Principles:

- **Advanced Learner Autonomy:** Students independently construct sophisticated knowledge through participation in complex language activities and academic tasks
- **Authentic Academic Communication:** Assessment reflects real-world academic and professional language use situations
- **Integrated Advanced Skills Development:** Recognition that proficient language use requires simultaneous application of multiple skills at sophisticated levels
- **Critical Language Awareness:** Emphasis on metalinguistic understanding alongside effective communication
- **Register and Genre Awareness:** Development of ability to navigate diverse registers and text types appropriately

Supporting Evidence:

Research demonstrates that advanced integrated skills approaches combined with explicit attention to vocabulary and grammar lead to enhanced language proficiency at B2-C1 levels, increased learner autonomy, and superior preparation for academic and professional contexts. This syllabus applies these principles through challenging assessment tasks that authentically evaluate students' ability to use English for complex communicative and academic purposes.

ASSESSMENT STRUCTURE

AS LEVEL ASSESSMENT (B2 Level)

No	Content	Exam
1	Reading, Writing & Language Use	Assessment Structure Paper 1: Reading, Writing, Vocabulary & Grammar Paper Duration: 3 hours Paper Weightage: 50%
2	Listening & Speaking	Paper 2: Listening & Advanced Speaking Paper Duration: 2 hours (including 15 minutes speaking per candidate) Paper Weightage: 50%

A2 LEVEL ASSESSMENT (B2-C1 Level)

No	Content	Exam
3	Advanced Reading, Writing & Language Use	Assessment Structure Paper 3: Advanced Reading, Advanced Writing, Advanced Vocabulary & Advanced Grammar Paper Duration: 3 hours 30 minutes Paper Weightage: 50%
4	Advanced Listening & Speaking	Paper 4: Advanced Listening & Speaking Paper Duration: 2 hours 30 minutes (including 20 minutes speaking per candidate) Paper Weightage: 50%

FULL A LEVEL (AS + A2)

Students must complete all four papers for the full A Level qualification:

Component	Weighting in Full A Level
Paper 1: Reading, Writing & Language Use	25%
Paper 2: Listening & Speaking	25%
Paper 3: Advanced Reading, Writing & Language Use	25%
Paper 4: Advanced Listening & Speaking	25%

AS LEVEL PAPERS

PAPER 1: READING, WRITING & LANGUAGE USE (AS Level - B2)

Duration: 3 hours | **Weighting:** 50% (AS Level); 25% (Full A Level)

Section A: Reading (50 minutes - 25% of paper)

- Two texts (600-800 words each) on general and academic topics
- Multiple choice questions (10 questions)
- Short answer questions requiring inference and interpretation
- Summary writing (150-200 words)

Section B: Vocabulary (35 minutes - 15% of paper)

- Contextual vocabulary (synonyms, antonyms, word meaning from context)
- Word formation (prefixes, suffixes, derivation)
- Collocations and idiomatic expressions
- Phrasal verbs in context
- Academic vocabulary application
- Register appropriateness

Section C: Grammar (35 minutes - 15% of paper)

- Error identification and correction (10 sentences)
- Sentence transformation maintaining meaning (8 transformations)
- Gap-filling with appropriate grammatical forms
- Mixed grammar: tenses, conditionals, passive voice, reported speech, modals, adjuncts, coordination and subordination. Sentence construction and combining

Section D: Writing (60 minutes - 45% of paper)

- **Task 1:** Extended essay (400-500 words)
 - Argumentative, discursive, or descriptive
 - Clear structure with introduction, body, conclusion
- **Task 2:** Formal communication (250-300 words)
 - Formal letter, email, or article
 - Appropriate register and format

PAPER 2: LISTENING & SPEAKING (AS Level - B2)

Duration: 2 hours (including 15 minutes speaking per candidate) | **Weighting:** 50% (AS Level); 25% (Full A Level)

Section A: Listening (1 hour 45 minutes - 60% of paper)

Part 1: Short Recordings (25 minutes)

- 4-5 recordings, each 1-2 minutes
- Multiple choice questions
- Note-taking exercises
- True/False/Not Given
- Matching information

Part 2: Extended Listening (40 minutes)

- 2 recordings, each 3-4 minutes (lectures, presentations, interviews)
- Gap-filling with appropriate words
- Short answer questions
- Summary completion

Part 3: Integrated Listening Task (40 minutes)

- 1-2 longer recordings (5-6 minutes each)
- Complex comprehension questions
- Inference questions
- Note-taking in structured format

Section B: Speaking (15 minutes per candidate - 40% of paper)

Part 1: Introduction and Interview (4 minutes)

- Personal information, studies, interests, experiences
- General topics and everyday situations

Part 2: Individual Long Turn (6 minutes)

- 1-minute preparation time
- 2-minute presentation on given topic card
- 4-minute follow-up discussion

Part 3: Two-Way Discussion (5 minutes)

- Abstract discussion related to Part 2 topic
- Expressing and justifying opinions
- Speculation, evaluation, and argumentation

A2 LEVEL PAPERS

PAPER 3: ADVANCED READING, WRITING & LANGUAGE USE (A2 Level - B2-C1)

Duration: 3 hours 30 minutes | **Weighting:** 50% (A2 Level); 25% (Full A Level)

Section A: Advanced Reading (65 minutes - 25% of paper)

- Two complex texts (900-1200 words each)
- Academic articles, literary extracts, critical essays
- Detailed comprehension requiring critical analysis
- Inference and implication questions
- Comparative analysis across texts
- Extended response requiring evaluation and synthesis (200-250 words)

Section B: Advanced Vocabulary (45 minutes - 15% of paper)

- Nuanced vocabulary distinction and connotation
- Complex word formation and derivational patterns
- Academic and specialized vocabulary
- Subject-specific terminology
- Lexical cohesion and collocation patterns

- Register and style appropriateness
- Contextual vocabulary in sophisticated texts

Section C: Advanced Grammar (45 minutes - 15% of paper)

- Advanced error detection in complex texts
- Sophisticated sentence transformation
- Advanced structures: inversion, cleft sentences, subjunctive
- Complex conditional forms
- Register-appropriate grammatical choices
- Cohesion devices: reference, substitution, ellipsis
- Advanced linking and discourse markers

Section D: Advanced writing (75 minutes - 45% of paper)

- **Task 1:** Academic essay (350 to 500 words)
 - Critical analysis, evaluation, or research-based argument
 - Sophisticated structure and evidence-based reasoning
- **Task 2:** Professional communication (350 to 400 words)
 - Formal proposal, critical review, or analytical report
 - Professional register and conventions

PAPER 4: ADVANCED LISTENING & SPEAKING (A2 Level - B2-C1)

Duration: 2 hours 30 minutes (including 20 minutes speaking per candidate) | **Weighting:** 50% (A2 Level); 25% (Full A Level)

Section A: Advanced Listening (2 hours 10 minutes - 60% of paper)

Part 1: Multiple Texts (40 minutes)

- 5-6 recordings in academic and professional contexts
- Identifying attitudes, opinions, and purposes
- Understanding implicit meanings
- Complex inference questions

Part 2: Extended Academic Listening (50 minutes)

- 2-3 recordings, each 5-7 minutes
- University lectures or professional seminars
- Complex argumentation and abstract concepts
- Academic note-taking format
- Multiple-source information integration

Part 3: Critical Listening (40 minutes)

- 1-2 extended discussions or debates (6-8 minutes each)
- Evaluating arguments and evidence
- Distinguishing fact from opinion
- Understanding rhetorical strategies
- Analyzing speakers' perspectives

Section B: Advanced Speaking (20 minutes per candidate - 40% of paper)

Part 1: Warm-up Discussion (4 minutes)

- Complex personal, social, and academic topics
- Abstract concepts and hypothetical situations

Part 2: Extended Presentation (8 minutes)

- 2-minute preparation time
- 3-minute in-depth presentation on academic/professional topic
- 5-minute critical discussion and defense of viewpoint

Part 3: Advanced Interaction (8 minutes)

- Sophisticated discussion of abstract concepts
- Critical evaluation and analysis
- Advanced argumentation and counter-argumentation
- Speculation, hypothesis, and analytical discussion

ASSESSMENT OBJECTIVES

AO1: WRITING SKILLS

Students will demonstrate the ability to:

- Write with sophistication and precision for complex purposes and diverse audiences
- Produce varied texts demonstrating advanced rhetorical strategies and argumentation
- Use language with creativity, persuasiveness, and stylistic awareness
- Apply extensive vocabulary, complex sentence structures, and advanced cohesive devices
- Demonstrate complete mastery of spelling, punctuation, and grammatical accuracy
- Adapt register, tone, and style appropriately for different contexts and audiences

AO2: READING SKILLS

Students will demonstrate the ability to:

- Read critically with sophisticated understanding of complex texts
- Analyse explicit and implicit meanings in challenging academic and literary texts
- Evaluate writers' techniques, perspectives, and rhetorical strategies
- Synthesize information from multiple complex sources
- Demonstrate understanding of textual nuances, connotations, and cultural references
- Critically assess arguments, evidence, and underlying assumptions

AO3: LISTENING SKILLS

Students will demonstrate the ability to:

- Process complex spoken discourse with full comprehension
- Identify main ideas, supporting details, and speaker attitudes in extended texts
- Infer meaning from context, tone, and implication
- Follow complex argumentation and abstract discussion
- Recognize relationships between ideas across extended discourse
- Understand diverse accents, registers, and speaking styles

AO4: SPEAKING SKILLS

Students will demonstrate the ability to:

- Communicate complex ideas fluently and coherently with minimal hesitation
- Develop extended discourse using sophisticated linking devices and discourse markers
- Express and defend opinions with well-developed argumentation
- Use extensive vocabulary and complex grammatical structures accurately
- Demonstrate complete control of pronunciation, intonation, and stress patterns
- Engage in sophisticated academic and professional discussion
- Respond flexibly and appropriately to unexpected questions and topics

AO5: VOCABULARY SKILLS

Students will demonstrate the ability to:

- Use extensive vocabulary range appropriate to B2-C1 levels
- Apply academic vocabulary accurately in context
- Demonstrate understanding of collocations, idiomatic expressions, and phrasal verbs
- Use word formation strategies effectively
- Select vocabulary appropriate to register, audience, and purpose
- Recognize and use nuanced distinctions in meaning
- Apply specialized and technical vocabulary appropriately

AO6: GRAMMAR SKILLS

Students will demonstrate the ability to:

- Use complex grammatical structures accurately and appropriately
- Apply advanced tense and aspect systems correctly
- Construct sophisticated sentences with multiple clauses
- Use passive voice, conditionals, and reported speech appropriately
- Apply modal verbs with subtle distinctions in meaning
- Demonstrate control of agreement, reference, and substitution
- Use grammatical structures suitable for register and context
- Recognize and correct grammatical errors in context

DETAILED COMPONENT BREAKDOWN

1. READING COMPONENT (AO2)

Aim

The aim of this component is to develop candidates' ability to read, comprehend, and critically analyse complex texts from diverse genres and registers. Candidates will engage with sophisticated fiction and non-fiction materials, including academic articles, literary extracts, journalistic writing, and professional documents. The focus is on developing critical reading skills, analytical thinking, and the ability to evaluate arguments, perspectives, and rhetorical strategies at an advanced level.

The learner will	The learner can
1. Be able to read and comprehend complex texts with sophisticated understanding	1.1 Identify and analyse explicit and implicit meanings in challenging texts
	1.2 Recognize and interpret nuanced language, including connotations, allusions, and cultural references
	1.3 Understand complex sentence structures and textual organization
2. Be able to critically analyse writers' techniques and purposes	2.1 Evaluate writers' use of language, style, and rhetorical devices to achieve specific effects
	2.2 Analyse how writers structure arguments and develop ideas
	2.3 Assess the effectiveness of writers' techniques in achieving their purposes
3. Be able to synthesize and evaluate	3.1 Compare and contrast perspectives across

The learner will	The learner can
information from multiple complex sources	multiple texts
	3.2 Synthesize information to form coherent understanding
	3.3 Critically evaluate arguments, evidence, and underlying assumptions

2. WRITING COMPONENT (AO1)

Aim

The aim of this component is to enable candidates to produce sophisticated, well-structured texts for complex purposes and diverse audiences. Candidates must demonstrate advanced control of grammar, extensive vocabulary range, and the ability to write in various genres and registers. Emphasis is placed on developing argumentation skills, rhetorical awareness, and the ability to adapt writing style to context and purpose at B2-C1 proficiency levels.

The learner will	The learner can
1. Be able to produce sophisticated written texts for complex purposes	1.1 Write clear, detailed, well-structured texts on complex subjects
	1.2 Develop arguments systematically with supporting evidence
	1.3 Use rhetorical devices effectively to enhance communication
2. Be able to demonstrate advanced control of language in writing	2.1 Apply extensive vocabulary range with precision and appropriacy
	2.2 Use complex sentence structures accurately and effectively
	2.3 Demonstrate complete mastery of spelling, punctuation, and grammar
3. Be able to adapt writing style to context, audience, and purpose	3.1 Select appropriate register, tone, and style for different contexts
	3.2 Write in various genres including academic, professional, and creative texts
	3.3 Use cohesive devices to ensure smooth flow and logical development

3. VOCABULARY COMPONENT (AO5)

Aim

The aim of this component is to develop candidates' sophisticated vocabulary range and their ability to use words precisely and appropriately in diverse contexts. Candidates will develop awareness of collocations, idiomatic expressions, word formation patterns, and register-appropriate vocabulary. Emphasis is placed on building academic vocabulary, understanding nuances in meaning, and applying lexical resources effectively at advanced levels.

Learning Outcomes - The learner will	Assessment Criteria - The learner can
1. Be able to demonstrate extensive vocabulary range	1.1 Use wide-ranging vocabulary appropriate to B2-C1 proficiency levels
	1.2 Apply academic and specialized vocabulary accurately in context
	1.3 Recognize and use synonyms, antonyms, and words with related meanings
2. Be able to understand and use vocabulary with precision	2.1 Demonstrate understanding of collocations and fixed expressions
	2.2 Use idiomatic expressions and phrasal verbs appropriately
	2.3 Apply word formation strategies including prefixes, suffixes, and compounding
3. Be able to select vocabulary appropriate to context	3.1 Choose vocabulary suitable for specific registers and audiences
	3.2 Recognize and apply nuanced distinctions in meaning
	3.3 Use vocabulary to create specific effects and convey subtle meanings

4. GRAMMAR COMPONENT (AO6)

Aim

The aim of this component is to develop candidates' ability to use complex grammatical structures accurately and appropriately at advanced levels. Candidates will demonstrate mastery of sophisticated sentence construction, advanced tense and aspect systems, and the ability to use grammatical structures suitable for different registers and contexts. Emphasis is placed on grammatical accuracy, range, and appropriacy in both receptive and productive skills.

Learning Outcomes - The learner will	Assessment Criteria - The learner can
1. Be able to use complex grammatical structures accurately	1.1 Construct sophisticated sentences with multiple clauses and embedded structures
	1.2 Use advanced tense and aspect systems correctly in context
	1.3 Apply conditional sentences, passive voice, and reported speech accurately
2. Be able to demonstrate grammatical range and flexibility	2.1 Use modal verbs with subtle distinctions in meaning
	2.2 Apply relative clauses, participle clauses, and other complex structures
	2.3 Demonstrate control of agreement, reference, and substitution
3. Be able to apply grammar appropriately for context	3.1 Select grammatical structures suitable for specific registers
	3.2 Recognize and correct grammatical errors in context
	3.3 Use grammatical structures to enhance clarity and communication effectiveness

5. LISTENING COMPONENT (AO3)

Aim

The aim of this component is to develop candidates' ability to comprehend complex spoken discourse in various contexts, including academic lectures, professional presentations, and sophisticated social interactions. Candidates will demonstrate understanding of both explicit and implicit meanings, follow extended argumentation, and process information from diverse speakers with different accents and speaking styles at B2-C1 proficiency levels.

Learning Outcomes - The learner will	Assessment Criteria - The learner can
1. Be able to comprehend extended spoken discourse	1.1 Understand main ideas and supporting details in complex spoken texts
	1.2 Follow extended argumentation and abstract discussion
	1.3 Comprehend diverse accents, registers, and speaking styles
2. Be able to process implicit meanings in spoken texts	2.1 Infer speakers' attitudes, opinions, and intentions
	2.2 Recognize irony, humor, and implied meanings
	2.3 Understand relationships between ideas across

Learning Outcomes - The learner will	Assessment Criteria - The learner can
	extended discourse
3. Be able to respond appropriately to complex spoken input	3.1 Take effective notes from academic lectures and presentations
	3.2 Synthesize information from multiple spoken sources
	3.3 Demonstrate understanding through appropriate responses and summaries

6. SPEAKING COMPONENT (AO4)

Aim

The aim of this component is to develop candidates' ability to communicate complex ideas fluently and coherently in English through extended discourse, presentations, and sophisticated interaction. Candidates will demonstrate the ability to present information, defend viewpoints, engage in abstract discussion, and communicate effectively in academic and professional contexts with minimal hesitation at B2-C1 proficiency levels.

Learning Outcomes - The learner will	Assessment Criteria - The learner can
1. Be able to produce extended spoken discourse	1.1 Deliver clear, detailed presentations on complex subjects
	1.2 Develop arguments systematically with supporting evidence
	1.3 Speak fluently with minimal hesitation and natural pace
2. Be able to demonstrate sophisticated language control in speaking	2.1 Use extensive vocabulary range accurately and appropriately
	2.2 Apply complex grammatical structures correctly in spontaneous speech
	2.3 Demonstrate excellent control of pronunciation, intonation, and stress
3. Be able to engage in sophisticated interaction	3.1 Participate effectively in extended discussions on abstract topics
	3.2 Respond flexibly to unexpected questions and topics
	3.3 Use appropriate strategies to maintain conversation and clarify meaning

PROFICIENCY LEVEL DESCRIPTORS

B2 LEVEL (UPPER INTERMEDIATE) - AS LEVEL TARGET

Reading: Can read with a large degree of independence, adapting style and speed of reading to different texts and purposes. Has a broad active reading vocabulary but may experience some difficulty with low-frequency idioms.

Writing: Can write clear, detailed text on a wide range of subjects. Can write an essay or report which develops an argument systematically with appropriate highlighting of significant points and relevant supporting detail.

Listening: Can understand extended speech and lectures and follow even complex lines of argument provided the topic is reasonably familiar. Can understand most TV news and current affairs programmes. Can understand the majority of films in standard dialect.

Speaking: Can interact with a degree of fluency and spontaneity that makes regular interaction with native speakers quite possible. Can take an active part in discussion in familiar contexts, accounting for and sustaining views.

Vocabulary: Has a good range of vocabulary for matters connected to his field and most general topics. Can vary formulation to avoid frequent repetition, but lexical gaps can still cause hesitation and circumlocution.

Grammar: Shows a relatively high degree of grammatical control. Does not make mistakes which lead to misunderstanding, and can correct most mistakes.

C1 LEVEL (ADVANCED) - A2 LEVEL TARGET

Reading: Can understand in detail lengthy, complex texts whether or not they relate to own area of speciality, provided that difficult passages can be reread. Can understand complex ideas within a long complex text.

Writing: Can express ideas fluently and spontaneously in writing. Can present clear, well-structured expositions of complex subjects. Can write clear, well-structured, detailed text on complex subjects, showing controlled use of organizational patterns, connectors and cohesive devices.

Listening: Can understand extended speech even when it is not clearly structured and when relationships are only implied and not signalled explicitly. Can understand television programmes and films without too much effort.

Speaking: Can express ideas fluently and spontaneously without much obvious searching for expressions. Can use language flexibly and effectively for social and professional purposes. Can present clear, detailed descriptions of complex subjects integrating sub-themes, developing particular points and rounding off with an appropriate conclusion.

Vocabulary: Has a good command of a broad lexical repertoire allowing gaps to be readily overcome with circumlocutions. Little obvious searching for expressions or avoidance strategies; only a conceptually difficult subject can hinder a natural, smooth flow of language.

Grammar: Consistently maintains a high degree of grammatical accuracy; errors are rare and difficult to spot.