



Securing Standards in Qualifications and Assessment

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Ofqual's reform responsibilities



Ofqual:

- sets criteria for design of qualifications
(eg how they are structured, how they are assessed)
- decides whether or not to accredit new GCSEs and A levels against these criteria
- is responsible for setting and securing standards



Accrediting new GCSEs and A levels



- Qualifications are being approved – aka accredited – by Ofqual
 - Exam boards submit their specifications and Ofqual checks they meet the set criteria
- There is no absolute timetable – Ofqual will only approve the qualifications when they are right
- Find out which qualifications have been accredited so far here:
[www.ofqual.gov.uk/qualifications-and-assessments/
qualification-reform/accredited-reformed-qualifications/](http://www.ofqual.gov.uk/qualifications-and-assessments/qualification-reform/accredited-reformed-qualifications/)



Ofqual's reform decisions



■ Core content

- each exam board specification should cover the same core of content
- tackles potential to compete over content, but should still allow innovation

■ Assessment objectives

- assessment objectives are being more carefully and precisely expressed and proportioned
- reduce the potential for objectives to be 'variably interpreted'

■ Assessment strategies

- exam boards have to produce strategies explaining how they will develop good assessments
- used in accreditation process, to ensure strategy is being followed in the development of assessment materials

■ Industry standards

- a common approach to working towards quality qualifications
- Help to develop agreed aspects of good assessment and avoid adverse impact of competition



New GCSE grading system

- Students will achieve grades 1 to 9 (or U) - 9 is the highest
- For each examination, the top 20% of those who get 7 or above will get a **9**
- Broadly the same proportion of students will get grade **7** and above as currently get **A & A***
- Grade **5** will be positioned in the top third of marks for a current grade **C** and bottom third of marks for a current grade **B**
- Broadly the same proportion of students will get grade **4** and above as currently achieve a grade **C** and above
- The bottom of grade **1** will align to the bottom of current grade **G**



New GCSE grading system

- New grading system reflects the step change in expectations of students
- Ofqual will use the established comparable outcomes approach to manage risk of unfair disadvantage or advantage to cohorts in first few years of new GCSEs
- Awarding will be done using judgements informed by data, rather than a criterion or norm referencing approach
- National reference test will be used to help identify changes in performance between cohorts



What will new GCSEs look like?

- **Structure** – linear (not broken into separately assessed units, with all exams in the summer at the end of the course)
(Resits of the whole qualification available in November for GCSEs in maths and English language only, for those aged 16+)
- **Assessment** – exam where possible, other forms of assessment only where necessary to assess essential subject skills
- **Tiered assessments** – only where necessary
- **Grading** – new numbered scale from 9 to 1 (plus U), 9 is the highest
- **Standard** – accessible to the same proportion of Key Stage 4 students as at present



What will reformed A levels look like?



- **Structure** – all exams in the summer at the end of the course
- **Assessment** – exam where possible, other forms of assessment only where necessary to assess essential subjects skills
- **Grading** – staying the same as now, A* - E (& U)
- **Demand** – same level of challenge as current A levels



What will reformed AS qualifications look like?

- **New AS qualifications will be introduced at the same time as each reformed A level is introduced**
- **Standalone** – new AS will not count towards an A level grade
- **Assessment** – by exam only at the end of the course, using other forms of assessment only where necessary to assess essential subjects skills
- **Co-teachable** – exam boards can design the standalone AS to be taught alongside first year of A level where possible
- **Grading** – staying the same as now, A - E (& U)
- **Demand** – new AS will have same level of challenge as current AS



Keep up-to-date on reform



www.ofqual.gov.uk/qualifications-and-assessments/qualification-reform/

Read and respond to our consultations

<http://comment.ofqual.gov.uk>



Ofqual wants qualifications that properly prepare young people for their next steps in education or work, that represent a level playing field for all students and which give valid results people can have confidence in.



Find out more



■ Visit

www.ofqual.gov.uk/qualifications-and-assessments/qualification-reform/

■ Questions?

call Ofqual's helpdesk – 0300 303 3346

email – info@ofqual.gov.uk

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