

UNDERSTANDING THE CHANGES TO GCSEs

September 2015 saw the start of curriculum and assessment reform come into place for year 10 and year 11 students. Key structural changes include:

A new grading system that uses the numbers 1-9 to identify levels of performance. (With grade 9 being the highest).

This means the phasing out of A*-G grades in Key stage 4.

Where a student's performance falls below a grade 1 a U grade will be awarded.

Tiering (foundation and higher papers) will only be available in subjects where untiered papers will not allow students at the lower ability range to demonstrate their skills, knowledge and understanding. (English language, English literature, Mathematics, Science and Modern foreign languages.)

GCSEs will be linear, therefore exams will be sat at the end of Key stage 4 only. Re-sits are available in Mathematics and English language in November of their year 12 studies.

Students will receive marks for the quality of their spelling, punctuation and grammar (SPAG) in examinations.

New grading system

Students in KS4 will now sit reformed GCSEs on a phased timescale of reform. This will mean that, nationally, students in some year groups will sit a mixture of legacy (A*-G) and the reformed 1-9 grading system.

1-9 grading system

The reformed GCSEs will all be graded between 1 and 9. A grade 5 is now defined as a "good pass" as opposed to a C grade. The diagram to the right illustrates how the new system equates to the legacy grading A*-G.

Ofqual

New GCSE grading structure

New grading structure	Current grading structure
9	
8	A*
7	A
6	B
5	B
4	C
3	D
2	E
1	F
	G
U	U

GOOD PASS (DfE)
5 and above – top of C and above

AWARDING
4 and above – bottom of C and above

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Year group	Reformed GCSEs 1-9	Legacy GCSEs A*-G	Vocational qualifications (Distinction, Merit and Pass)	Examination year
11	English Language English Literature Mathematics	Core Science Triple Science Additional Science ICT Business Studies History Geography Religious Education Modern Foreign Languages Art and Design Drama Dance Catering	BTEC Sport BTEC Science BTEC Music ECDL (European Computer Driving Licence) Financial Capability	2017
10	English Language English Literature Mathematics Core Science Triple Science Additional Science ICT Business Studies History Geography Religious Education Modern Foreign Languages Art and Design Drama Dance Computer Science Food and Nutrition	Resistant Materials Textiles	BTEC Sport BTEC Music ECDL (European Computer Driving Licence) Financial Capability	2018
9	All subjects	None	To be confirmed	2019
8	All subjects	None	To be confirmed	2020
7	All subjects	None	To be confirmed	2021