



Ofqual

9 to 1 news.



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Why and how are GCSEs changing?

GCSEs in England are being reformed, to match the best systems in the world and keep pace with universities' and employers' demands.

- GCSE content will be more challenging but still suitable for a wide range of abilities
- GCSEs will be graded on a new scale of 9 to 1 rather than A* to G, with 9 the highest grade, to distinguish clearly between the reformed and unreformed qualifications



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- The Government's aims for the reformed qualifications are to:
- Match with the highest performing education systems around the world
- Identify and reward the highest performing students
- Remove modularisation which encourages bite-sized learning
- Better prepare students for work, and further and higher education
- Reduce the burden of exams on students and teachers
- Ensure assessment is more robust and rigorous



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When do these reforms affect GCSE students ?

Started course in 2016, exams 2018	Start course in 2017, exams 2019	Start course in 2018, exams 2020
English and maths (as in 2017) plus: French, German, Latin, Spanish, classical Greek biology, chemistry, physics, combined science, geography, history, art and design computer science, dance, drama, music, food preparation and nutrition, physical education, religious studies (including short course) citizenship studies (and short course),	2016 subjects plus: Arabic, Bengali, Chinese, Japanese, Polish, modern Greek, modern Hebrew, Panjabi, Russian, Italian, Urdu economics, statistics electronics, engineering, astronomy, business, classical civilisation, design and technology, ancient history, film studies, media studies, geology, PE short course, psychology, sociology	All previous subjects plus: Gujarati, biblical Hebrew, Persian, Portuguese, Turkish.



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What is happening?

GCSEs are being reformed, taught and awarded over several years, between 2015 and 2020.

English language, English literature and maths GCSEs have been reformed, taught and awarded for the first time already, in 2017. Teaching of more reformed qualifications started in **September** 2017.

Why?

English and maths had a lot of changes made to content and this work started first, so they were the first to be reformed.



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How will this affect students?

Students who were in year 11 in September 2017

These students will sit a mixture of reformed and unreformed GCSEs; subjects affected are outlined in the table above. They will sit the reformed (9 to 1) GCSEs in English language, English literature and maths and any of the subjects listed in the table on the left, plus unreformed exams in all other GCSE subjects. Both the unreformed and reformed qualifications will be accepted by employers, sixth forms and colleges. Exam certificates awarded in 2018 and 2019 will have mixture of numbers and letters on them.



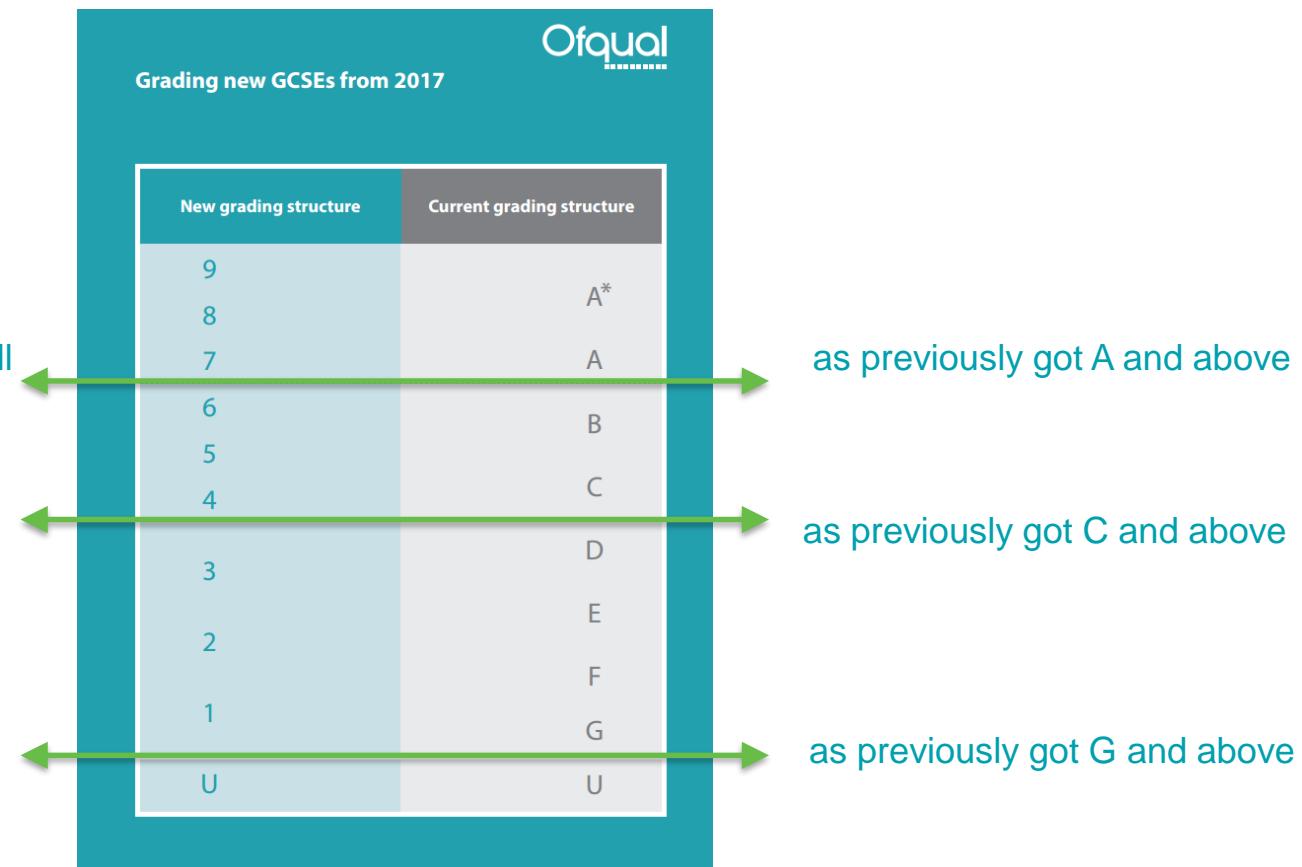
- **Students who were in year 10 or younger in September 2017**
- These students will only take reformed GCSEs, with the exception of some languages with smaller cohorts. Their GCSEs will all be awarded in numbers, with the same exception.



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New GCSE grading structure



- The new 9-1 grading system means that it will be clear to employers and colleges or universities whether students have taken the unreformed GCSEs or the reformed, more challenging ones. The new grade scale is not directly equivalent to the existing one. However, there are some comparable points with the old grades. The approach used will ensure that in the first year of a new qualification:



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- Broadly the same proportion of pupils will achieve a grade 7 and above as previously achieved a grade A and above
- Broadly the same proportion of pupils will achieve a grade 4 and above as previously achieve a grade C and above
- Broadly the same proportion of pupils will achieve a grade 1 and above as previously achieve a grade G and above
- Grades 2, 3, 5 and 6 will be evenly spaced between these points.



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The new system has more grades. With the exceptions of the grade anchoring points described in the previous slide (for example the C/D boundary equates to the 4/3 boundary), there are no other direct grade comparisons or conversions to be made. For example, while it is true to say that broadly the same proportion of candidates will get a 4 AND ABOVE as previously got a C AND ABOVE, it is NOT true to say a grade 4 is equivalent to a grade C. This is because of the expanded number of grades above a 4. So, a grade 4 represents approximately the bottom two thirds of a grade C, while a grade 5 is the equivalent of approximately the top third of grade C and the bottom third of grade B.



There is more differentiation in the reformed qualifications, as there are three top grades (7,8 and 9), compared to two in the unreformed qualifications (A and A*). Fewer students get a grade 9 than previously got an A*.

Employers, colleges and universities will continue to set their own entry requirements. We are working with them to make sure they understand the new grading scale.



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