



Where to go for more information

Contact the school

If you have any questions about the changes to GCSEs and how this will affect your daughter, please speak to her subject teacher or Head of Year.

External links

The government explains its reasons for reforming GCSEs in appendix 4 of a policy paper linked to below:

- **2010 to 2015 government policy: school and college qualifications and curriculum**, GOV.UK – DfE
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/2010-to-2015-government-policy-school-and-college-qualifications-and-curriculum/2010-to-2015-government-policy-school-and-college-qualifications-and-curriculum>

Ofqual regulates qualifications, examinations and assessments. It provides more information about the changes to GCSEs and the new GCSE grading structure:

- **New GCSE grading structure**, GOV.UK – Ofqual
https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/435615/2015-06-16-postcard-new-gcse-grading-structure.pdf
- **Get the facts: GCSE reform**, GOV.UK – Ofqual
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/get-the-facts-gcse-and-a-level-reform/get-the-facts-gcse-reform>

The BBC and the NHS provide advice on supporting your child through exams:

- **Helping your child through exams**, BBC
http://www.bbc.co.uk/schools/parents/helping_with_exams/
- **Beat school exam stress**, NHS
<http://www.nhs.uk/Livewell/childhealth6-15/Pages/Examstress.aspx>

Changes to GCSEs from September 2015

Adapted from the The Key website: The Key provides trusted leadership and management support to schools.

From September 2015, pupils in year 10 will begin to take new reformed GCSEs. Pupils in Year 11 are not affected as they began their GCSEs in September 2014.

The first new GCSEs to be taught from September 2015 will be in English language, English literature and maths. New GCSEs in other subjects will follow in September 2016 and 2017.

The first assessment of the new GCSE courses that start in September 2015 will be in June 2017.

What are the key features of the new GCSEs?

The Department for Education (DfE) has made a number of changes to the characteristics of the new GCSEs.

Key features include:

- A new grading scale that uses the numbers 9-1 to replace the A* - G scale for identifying levels of performance
- 'Untiered' test papers in most subjects, where students will sit the same test papers at the same level regardless of ability. Some subjects, such as maths, will be tiered where untiered papers do not allow lower ability students to demonstrate their knowledge and skills or do not stretch the most able
- Students will be assessed at the end of the course and subject content will not be divided into modules
- Assessment will be made by external exam, except where non-exam assessment is the only way to assess certain skills
- Students will only sit exams in the summer. Students will only be able to resit exams in November for English language and maths if they were at least 16 on the preceding 31 August.

How is the new grading scale different?

The new GCSEs will be graded using the numbers 9-1, with 9 being the highest and 1 the lowest.

Where performance is below the minimum required to pass a GCSE, students will receive a U.

The new grading scale will be used for the first time at the end of the new GCSE courses in English language, English literature and maths in 2017.

The chart below compares the new GCSE grading structure to the one currently used for the old 'legacy' GCSEs. For example, a C sits between a 4 and 5 in the new grading structure:

NEW GCSE GRADING STRUCTURE	CURRENT GCSE GRADING STRUCTURE
9	A*
8	
7	A
6	B
5	
4	C
3	
2	D
1	E
	F
	G
U	U

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

AWARDING
4 and above = bottom of C and above

Source: New GCSE grading structure, GOV.UK - Ofqual

FAQs

My daughter is in year 10. How will she be assessed in her GCSE subjects in the summer of 2017?

In English language, English literature and maths, your daughter will be graded using the new 9-1 grading structure in 2017. In any other subjects your daughter takes she will be graded using the A* - G grading structure in 2017.

My daughter is in year 9. How will she be assessed in her GCSE subjects in the summer of 2018?

Your daughter will be graded using the new 9-1 grading structure in the core subjects (English language, English literature, maths, religious studies and the sciences), the EBacc subjects (history, geography and languages), and some other subjects (art, drama, dance, music, GCSE PE, computer science and food preparation and nutrition).

In any other subjects your daughter takes she will be graded using the A* - G grading structure.

As your daughter starts her GCSE course in Science in Year 9, her target, challenge and current attainment grades have been changed to reflect the new grading system.

Are the new GCSEs going to be more challenging?

Yes, the government explained that one of the main reasons why GCSEs are being reformed is to make them more challenging. For example, the new English language GCSE will require better reading skills and good written English.

When will all of the new GCSEs be introduced?

The last batch of new GCSEs will be introduced in September 2017. Therefore if your daughter is in year 7 or year 8 in September 2015, she will sit all new GCSEs graded 9-1.