



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: Reformed versus legacy qualifications

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

In September 2015, pupils in year 10 began to study reformed GCSEs. The first new GCSEs to be taught were English language, English literature and maths. Other GCSEs followed in September 2016 and the remaining subjects to be reformed are to be taught from September 2017.

The first assessment of the new GCSE courses that started in September 2015 took place in June 2017. In June 2018, the new courses that pupils will be assessed include the core subjects (English language, English literature, mathematics, 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),

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 1 – 9 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.

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. The new grading scale will be used for the reformed subjects listed on the previous page.

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

The old and new GCSE grading scales do not directly compare but there are three points where they align, as the diagram shows:

- The bottom of grade 7 is aligned with the bottom of grade A;
- The bottom of grade 4 is aligned with the bottom of grade C; and
- The bottom of grade 1 is aligned with the bottom of grade G.

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

Source: GCSE new scale: factsheets, GOV.UK - Ofqual

FAQs

My daughter is in year 11. How will she be assessed in her GCSE subjects in the summer of 2018?

In the core subjects (English language, English literature, mathematics, 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), your daughter will be graded using the new 9-1 grading structure in 2018.

In any other subjects your daughter takes she will be graded using the A* - G grading structure in 2018.

My daughter is in Year 7, 8, 9 or 10. How will she be assessed in her GCSE subjects at the end of Year 11?

Your daughter will be graded using the new 9-1 grading structure in all of her GCSE subjects.

In any other GCSE-equivalent level 2 subjects your daughter takes she will be graded using the grading structure relevant for that course.

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. The grading scale has been changed to make that clear to employers and universities.