

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 child, please speak to your child's form tutor or subject teacher.

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>



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Parent's Guide Changes to GCSEs from September 2015

From September 2015, students in year 10 will begin to take new reformed GCSEs.

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 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. 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 1 – 9, 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	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

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

FAQs

My child is in year 10. How will he be assessed in his GCSE subjects?

Your child will be graded using the new 1 - 9 grading structure in all subjects

My child is in year 11. How will she be assessed in her GCSE subjects?

In English language, English literature and maths, your child will be graded using the new 1 - 9 grading structure in 2017.

In subjects other than English language, English literature and maths, your child will be graded using the A* - G grading structure in 2017.

Are the new GCSEs going to be more challenging?

Yes, the government has 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 child is in year 8 or year 9 in September 2016, he or she will sit all new GCSEs.