

Changes to qualifications

GCSEs and A Levels are being reformed into linear qualifications. For further details including information specific to younger year groups, the following link is very helpful:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/timeline-of-changes-to-gcse-as-and-a-levels/changes-to-gcse-as-and-a-levels-that-will-affect-each-current-school-year-group>



Linear qualifications are assessed by exams at the end of the course, rather than by modules throughout the course. These reforms are being introduced in phases.

Changes to qualifications

AS and A Levels

Under the old system, the AS level was made up of two modules. Students could either bank those modules and get the AS level (worth half an A-level), or go on to add a further two modules to make up the full A-level.

Under the new system, AS levels are standalone qualifications worth half an A-level. Students can still take them, but the results do *not* count towards the final A-level grade. Students wishing to get a full A-level must study for two years and take all the exams at the end of Year 13.

NB: There are still a number of subjects that are offered which are BTECs or Cambridge Technical qualifications. These include Business Studies, Sport, Applied Science and IT.

AS and A-level grades will still be A*-E with U as a fail grade. These reforms are being phased in as follows (Exam boards for Devizes School are in brackets – where these are not yet confirmed, there is an *):

Year group	New-style linear A-levels	Old style modular A-levels
Year 12 starting September 2015 (Current Year 12) AS awards in 2016 A level awards in 2017	Art and Design (AQA) Biology (AQA) Chemistry (AQA) English Language (OCR) English Literature (OCR) History (OCR) Photography (AQA) Physics (OCR) Psychology (AQA)	Drama Further Maths Film Geography Health & Social Care Mathematics PE Resistant Materials Graphic Products Religious Studies
Year 12 starting September 2016 (Current Year 11) AS awards in 2017 A level awards in 2018	As above plus: Drama and Theatre Studies (OCR*) Geography (AQA*) French (AQA*) Spanish (AQA*) PE (OCR*) Religious Studies (AQA*)	Film Further Maths Mathematics Health & Social Care Resistant Materials Graphic Products
Year 12 starting September 2017 Current Year 10 AS awards in 2018 A level awards in 2019	As above plus: DT Subjects Film Further Maths Maths	

Changes to qualifications

GCSEs

GCSEs have already been reformed into linear qualifications, with all the assessment taken at the end of the course. New reforms are bringing in a revised grading system based on the numbers 9-1, with 9 being the highest, as follows:



New GCSE grading structure

New grading structure	Current grading structure
9	
8	A*
7	A
6	B
5	
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

Broadly the same proportion of students will achieve a grade 4 and above in the new GCSEs as currently achieve a grade C and above (shown by the dotted line). However, Grade 5 in the new GCSE will be a “good pass”. Consequently fewer students nationally will achieve a “good pass” grade in the new GCSEs.

Changes to qualifications

The GCSE reforms are being phased in as follows:

Year group	New style 9-1 GCSEs	Old style A*-G GCSEs
Year 10 starting September 2015 Current Year 10 GCSE awards in 2017	English Language (AQA) English Literature (AQA) Maths (Edexcel)	Everything else
Year 10 starting September 2016 Current Year 9 GCSE awards in 2018	As above plus: Art (Edexcel*) Biology (AQA*) Chemistry (AQA*) Computing Double Science (AQA*) Drama (OCR*) French (Edexcel*) Geography (AQA*) History (Edexcel*) Music PE (OCR*) Photography (Edexcel*) Physics (AQA*) Religious Studies (AQA*) Spanish (Edexcel*)	Child Development Design & Technology Subjects
Year 10 starting September 2017 Current Year 8 GCSE awards in 2019	As above plus: Design & Technology subjects	

This means that students in 2017 and 2018 (current Y9 and Y10) will receive GCSEs with a mixture of number and letter grades.

Practical Work

The new-style GCSEs place an increased emphasis on end-of-course exam assessment.

- Speaking and listening has already been removed from GCSE English Language. It is assessed and reported separately but does not count towards the final GCSE grade which is based 100% on exams.
- In the new style 9-1 Science GCSE, practical work will be carried out during the course and assessed solely in the exams at the end. There will be no "ISA" assessments of practical skills.
- Practical assessment remains part of the new-style GCSEs in (but in some cases, this is a reduction from previous years with a higher percentage of the final grade being assessed by terminal exam):
 - Art (60%)
 - Design and Technology (50% TBC)
 - Drama (60%)
 - PE (40%)
 - Modern Languages (25% speaking)
 - Music (30%)

All other new-style GCSEs are assessed completely on exams taken at the end of the course.