

GCSE and A level reform 2015

Our support for you throughout
specification change and beyond



GCSE and A level reform 2015

The UK Department for Education (DfE) and Ofqual confirmed reforms to GCSE and A level qualifications in the UK and internationally. This means that new specifications for GCSE and A level qualifications in some subjects have been introduced for first teaching from September 2015.

We've put together this brochure to help you keep track of the reforms, so you can understand what the changes are and how they will affect you as teachers. We also want to tell you about the comprehensive support we are providing you with – not only now but throughout curriculum change and beyond.

Edexcel GCSE and A level qualifications are regulated by Ofqual (Office of Qualifications and Examinations Regulation in England), and international schools that offer these revised qualifications will be following the same content and assessment approach as UK schools.

Take a look at the information enclosed. We hope it will provide you with a better understanding of what lies ahead for GCSEs and A levels.

To learn more about A level reform, visit:

qualifications.pearson.com/edexcel-alevel-reform

To learn more about GCSE reform, visit:

qualifications.pearson.com/edexcel-gcse-reform

Make sure you know all about GCSE and A level reform – sign up to receive emails by completing this online form:

<http://qualifications.pearson.com/updates>

Contents

What's changing?

See our summary of what's changing to GCSEs and A levels from 2015.

See pages 4–5 

Reform timeline

Have a look at the GCSE and A level reform timelines to see what's happening and when.

See pages 6–7 

Helping you to understand and implement the reforms

Find out more about the work we are doing to support you through curriculum reform.

See page 8 

Supporting you throughout and beyond the reforms

Browse through our support pages to see the full range of support we provide you with as you prepare and plan for specification change.

See pages 9–14 

Next steps

Find out how you can get further information and how to ensure you and your colleagues are kept informed throughout this period of specification change.

See page 15 

What's changing?

GCSE reform

- ◆ New GCSEs in English Literature, English Language and Mathematics, for first teaching from September 2015 and first assessment in summer 2017.
- ◆ New GCSEs for first teaching from September 2016 are: Geography, History, Biology, Chemistry, Physics, Languages, Art and Design, Citizenship Studies, Computer Science, Design and Technology, Drama, Music, Physical Education and Religious Studies.

Features of the new GCSEs

- ◆ A new 9 – 1 grading scale with 9 being the top level. Grade 5 is proposed as a link to the international PISA tests and Grade 4 equivalent to the current C grade.
- ◆ A fully linear structure.
- ◆ Tiering will only be used for subjects where untiered papers will not allow students at the lower end of the ability range to demonstrate their knowledge and skills, or will not stretch the most able †.
- ◆ Exams will be the preferred method of assessment, except where they cannot provide valid assessment of the skills required ††.
- ◆ Exams in the summer term only.
- ◆ November resits for English Language and Mathematics only, for students who were at least 16 on the preceding 31st August.

† For tiered subjects the tiering model used will be confirmed by Ofqual on a subject-by-subject basis. So far, it has been decided that Maths and Science will be tiered.

†† Decisions on non-exam assessment will be confirmed by Ofqual on a subject-by-subject basis.



What's changing?

A level reform

- ◆ New A levels for first teaching from September 2015 and first assessment in summer 2017 are: English Language, English Literature, English Language and Literature, Physics, Chemistry, Biology, History, Psychology, Art and Design, Business, Economics, Sociology and Computer Science.
- ◆ Other subjects will be introduced for first teaching from September 2016. These are Geography, Languages, Drama and Theatre, Music, Physical Education and Religious Studies.
- ◆ A full list of subjects for first teaching from September 2017 will be available soon, but will include Design and Technology, Mathematics and Further Mathematics.

What will happen to AS?

- ◆ AS will be a standalone qualification for first teaching from September 2015.
- ◆ It will no longer contribute to the A level grade.
- ◆ Apart from Art and Design, AS qualifications will be exam only.
- ◆ New AS qualifications will be designed to offer breadth to the curriculum and will broadly remain at their current standard.
- ◆ In some subjects, it may be appropriate for the AS to be designed to be co-taught with the first year of the A level.

Learn more about the reform and find links to related DfE and Ofqual pages at

qualifications.pearson.com/edexcel-alevel-reform

Timeline of GCSE qualification reform

GCSEs are being reformed in stages. Subjects in the **first stage** are English Language, English Literature and Mathematics. These subjects have been reformed for first teaching in September 2015.

Subjects in the **second stage** will be available for first teaching in September 2016. These are Biology, Chemistry, Physics, History, Geography, Languages, Art and Design, Citizenship Studies, Computer Science, Design and Technology, Drama, Music, Physical Education and Religious Studies.

	2015	2016	2017	2018
Current GCSEs	<p>June 2015 Summer exam series for current GCSEs, linear qualifications only.</p>	<p>June 2016 Final summer exam series for current GCSEs in English, English Language, English Literature, and Mathematics.</p> <p>November 2016 Final exam resit opportunity for current GCSEs in English, English Language and Mathematics. Linear assessment only.</p>		
First stage subjects	<p>September 2015 First teaching of new GCSEs included as first stage subjects.</p>		<p>June 2017 First exam series for new GCSEs in English Language, English Literature and Mathematics – first stage subjects.</p> <p>November 2017 First November exams for new GCSEs in English Language and Mathematics,</p>	
Second stage subjects		<p>September 2016 First teaching of new GCSEs included as second stage subjects.</p>	<p>June 2017 Final summer exam series for current GCSEs – second stage subjects.</p>	<p>June 2018 First exam series for new GCSEs – second stage subjects.</p>

† Subject to Ofqual accreditation.

Timeline of A level qualification reform

AS and A levels are being reformed in stages. Subjects in the first stage are English Language, English Literature, English Language and Literature, Biology, Chemistry, Physics, History, Psychology, Art and Design, Business, Economics, Economics and Business, Computer Science and Sociology. These subjects have been reformed for first teaching in September 2015.

Subjects in the second stage will be available for first teaching in September 2016. These are Languages, Geography, Drama, Music, Physical Education and Religious Studies. Subjects in the third stage will be available for first teaching in September 2017. These are Mathematics, Further Mathematics and Design and Technology.

	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
Current A levels	June 2015 Summer exam series for current AS and A2 courses.	June 2016 Final summer exam series for current AS and A2 courses in first stage subjects.	June 2017 Final summer exam series for current AS and A level second stage subjects.		
First stage subjects	September 2015 First teaching of new AS and A levels included in the first stage.	June 2016 First exam series for new AS courses included in the first stage.	June 2017 First exam series for new A level subjects included in the first stage. ††		
Second stage subjects		September 2016 First teaching of new AS and A levels for second stage subjects.	June 2017 First exam series for new AS subjects included in the second stage.	June 2018 First exam series for new A level subjects included in the second stage.	
Third stage subjects			September 2016 First teaching of new AS and A levels for third stage subjects.	June 2018 First exam series for new AS subjects included in the third stage.	June 2019 First exam series for new A level subjects included in the third stage.

† Subject to Ofqual accreditation.

†† Note that new A levels do not have an AS and A2 exam component. They are therefore referred to as 'A level exams' as opposed to 'A2 exams'.

Helping you to understand and implement the reforms

As you plan, prepare and teach the newly designed specifications, we are here to support you every step of the way and are working hard to ensure that you will have everything you need.

In developing our new qualifications, we have been focusing our efforts on a number of key areas:

Expert panel

We've set up an 'expert panel': a team of global experts in education chaired by Sir Michael Barber. This panel has advised us on what really works in education and has advised us to ensure that we're doing all we can to empower students to achieve their aspirations.

International research

We have been undertaking world-wide research to develop qualifications that are world class. We have been talking to teachers, learners and also higher education, employers and the government so that we can turn our common goal into a reality – that of progress through education.

World-class qualifications

We have worked hard to develop the very best specifications. Our assessment, and the learning resources and professional development that underpin it, set and maintain high standards to ensure that not only students but also employers and universities are confident in the knowledge, skills and competencies of the learner.

Recognising that learners progress at different rates and have different needs, we have ensured that our qualifications support the ambitions of all learners to enable them to make progress in their life.

Helping you to be the best you can be

We know that the single most important contribution to education is the quality of teaching. Brilliant teachers are at the heart of successful learner progress. We are providing teachers with support, so that you can continue to deliver excellence in education, during this time of curriculum change.

Supporting you throughout qualification reform

We will support you fully throughout this period of qualification reform. Over the coming months, we'll provide all the information you and your colleagues need to ensure you have a full understanding of all the changes.

We already offer a range of tools and services to help you deliver our Edexcel qualifications and we will continue to provide these and other support for 2015 and beyond.

Personal support <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Subject Advisors• Also: online communities and regional office staff. See page 10	Training from Pearson <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Launch events• Professional development See page 11	Policy <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Policy updates• Policy Watch See page 12	Planning, delivery, training and learning <ul style="list-style-type: none">• SAMs• Schemes of Work• Subject-specific free content• Paid-for resources• Endorsed resources See page 13	Tracking progress <ul style="list-style-type: none">• ResultsPlus• Mock Analysis• examWizard See page 14
--	---	---	---	---

Throughout qualification reform, everything we do and all the services we offer, are underpinned by one vision for each subject – an evidence-based view on how to improve learning and help learners to make progress.

A level reform:
qualifications.pearson.com/edexcel-alevel-reform

GCSE reform:
qualifications.pearson.com/edexcel-gcse-reform

Supporting you through qualification reform

Personal support for curriculum design

We aim to offer you the support you want when you want it. Our teams of support staff are here to provide you with a personal experience, either face to face, online, by email or on the phone.

Subject Advisor support

We have a team of specialist Subject Advisors ready to answer queries and offer advice for a range of subjects. You can sign up to receive emails from your Subject Advisor and be kept up to date about:

- ◆ training events and support materials
- ◆ news and government announcements affecting our qualifications
- ◆ key dates and entry deadlines
- ◆ new qualifications and resources.



Sign up to receive emails with all the latest news and information on your subject, including news on GCSE and A level reform at qualifications.pearson.com/subject-advisor-updates

Online communities

Connect with other tutors around the world. Share ideas and resources and stay up to date with the latest subject developments. Visit: qualifications.pearson.com/communities

Supporting you through qualification reform

Training from Pearson

Training from Pearson is designed to support your needs. With an option of face-to-face or online training you can choose where, when and how you want to be trained.

Teacher support events:

We will be running FREE launch events and getting ready to teach events for our new 2015 and 2016 GCSE and A level qualifications, both locally and online.

Our live online events are:

- ◆ Interactive – ask questions, contribute to polls, join in activities and discussion, share ideas and best practice.
- ◆ Flexible – you can log in from home or school.
- ◆ Convenient – no need to travel or miss out on classroom time.
- ◆ Cost effective – your whole department can share a single login, letting you train together as a team, without needing to arrange travel or cover.
- ◆ Easy to use – simple, readily available technology lets you start training with one click of a button.
- ◆ In addition, all materials will be published after the event series has come to an end and made freely available.

To learn more about training go to:

qualifications.pearson.com/support-training



Visit our dedicated web pages to learn more about planning, delivery, teaching and learning for your subjects.

A level reform:

[qualifications.pearson.com/
edexcel-alevel-reform](http://qualifications.pearson.com/edexcel-alevel-reform)

GCSE reform:

[qualifications.pearson.com/
edexcel-gcse-reform](http://qualifications.pearson.com/edexcel-gcse-reform)

Supporting you through qualification reform

Policy

We continually monitor and report on policy developments and run appropriate events to help keep you informed of key issues that may affect you.

Policy Watch

Policy Watch is managed by **Steve Besley** to help colleagues keep up to date with national developments. Sign up to Steve's Policy Watch updates at: <http://uk.pearson.com/pearsonataoc/policy-hub.html> or follow Steve on **Twitter@SteveBesley**.

Supporting you through qualification reform

Planning, delivery, teaching and learning

We appreciate that some of the new qualifications may require rethinking when it comes to planning and timetabling. As such, we provide a comprehensive list of guidance materials and support to ensure you and your colleagues feel fully confident in setting up their new courses. All our qualifications are accompanied by:

- ◆ a range of course planners, outlining different delivery models
- ◆ a selection of schemes of work
- ◆ a Getting Started guide, with exemplars and detailed guidance
- ◆ mapping documents.

In many cases, these materials are based on tried- and-tested pedagogies that are underpinned by an evidence base: that is to say, we know they work.



Supporting you through qualification reform

Tracking learner progress

In a linear world, formative assessment becomes even more critical in giving you sight of the progress your learners are making. We will support you with this, whether through extra assessment materials, our ResultsPlus reporting service or suggested interventions.

Our new qualifications are accompanied by additional sets of sample papers prior to first teaching, for use as mock exams or earlier in the course.

ResultsPlus

ResultsPlus is a free online service, which provides the most detailed analysis available of your students' exam performance.

- ◆ Identify potential topics, skills and types of question where students may need to develop their learning further.
- ◆ See actual scores for each exam question for a student, class or group.
- ◆ Compare your students' performance with class and Edexcel national averages.

Learn more at
qualifications.pearson.com/resultsplus

ResultsPlus

ResultsPlus Mock Analysis

This service provides analysis of past exam papers which can be set as mock exams. It gives you in-depth understanding of students' strengths and weaknesses BEFORE they take the real exams, so you can use this information to inform future teaching and learning.

examWizard

Create your own tests online using FREE past paper questions

This free online exam preparation tool contains a huge bank of past Edexcel exam questions and support materials to help you create your own mock exams, topic tests, homework or revision activities for a range of GCSE and A level subjects.

Learn more at
www.examwizard.co.uk





Next steps...

GCSE and A level reform – our commitment to you

We will provide further information and support on an ongoing basis to help you and your colleagues deliver reformed GCSE and A level specifications.

We will ensure that your school has all the information and support you need to deliver the new GCSE and A level qualifications in 2015 and beyond.

We will keep our website up to date as new announcements and key documents become available.

Make sure you know all about GCSE and A level reform.
Sign up to receive emails with the latest news by
completing this online form:

<http://qualifications.pearson.com/updates>

World-class students for world class universities

In addition to our GCSE and A level qualifications, which are offered by both UK and international schools, we have a range of Edexcel academic qualifications exclusively available to schools outside of the UK.

Developed to Pearson's world-class principles, these qualifications provide international schools with the unique opportunity to teach a programme tailored to the needs of the global learner.

International Primary and Lower Secondary Curriculum (PLSC)

Developed by experienced primary and secondary educationalists to better prepare students for level 2, Edexcel PLSC provides a fully flexible, easy-to-implement curriculum framework and an effective way to monitor pupil progress.

International GCSE

Providing the same high academic standard as GCSE, many International GCSEs have a distinct international element. Where possible, our specialists have developed subject content to allow teachers to base work on their own country, making it more relevant to students.

We are making some updates to our Edexcel International GCSE qualifications for first teaching in September 2016 and 2017. To find out more please visit: qualifications.pearson.com/edexcel-internationalgcse-update

International Advanced Levels (IAL)

Developed for the unique needs of the global learner, Edexcel International Advanced Level (IAL) has the same rigorous academic merit as the A level and is currently available in 12 popular subjects including – Mathematics, Biology, Physics and Chemistry; with a further 6 subjects available for first teaching from September 2016.

Learn more at qualifications.pearson.com/edexcel



Pearson Education is committed to reducing its impact on the environment by using responsibly sourced and recycled paper.

