

Accreditation Criterion

For All Qualifications Subject to an Accreditation Requirement

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Contents

Introduction	2
About this document	2
About accreditation	2
Accreditation criterion	4
Appendix 1 – Qualifications accredited against previous criteria	5
GCSE Qualifications (graded from 9 to 1)	5
GCSE Qualifications (graded from A* to G)	5
GCE Qualifications	6
All other qualifications	7

Introduction

About this document

This document sets out the accreditation criterion which applies to all qualifications which are subject to an accreditation requirement under section 138(1) of the Apprenticeships, Skills, Children and Learning Act 2009 ('the 2009 Act').

Where it is not already in force, this accreditation criterion comes into effect at 12.01am on Saturday 1st November 2014. It replaces all previous accreditation criteria for the qualifications which are currently subject to an accreditation requirement under section 138(1) of the 2009 Act.

In particular, this document replaces the following documents which came into force on 19th June 2014:

- *GCSE (9 to 1) Accreditation Criterion (Ofqual/14/5472);*
- *GCE Accreditation Criterion (Ofqual/14/5473); and*
- *GCSE (A* to G) Accreditation Criterion (Ofqual/14/5474).*

About accreditation

Section 138(1) of the 2009 Act allows us to specify qualifications, or descriptions of qualifications that are subject to an accreditation requirement.

If a qualification is subject to an accreditation requirement, then – under section 132(5) of the 2009 Act – an awarding organisation may not award or authenticate that qualification until it has been accredited by Ofqual.

We accredit qualifications against accreditation criteria which we set and publish under section 140(1) of the 2009 Act. We will accredit a qualification submitted to us by an awarding organisation if:

- that awarding organisation has been recognised in respect of that qualification or type of qualification, and
- the qualification submitted to us meets the relevant accreditation criteria.

The accreditation of a qualification has effect from such a date as we may specify.

Qualifications subject to an accreditation requirement

With effect from 12.01am on Saturday 1st November 2014, the following descriptions of qualifications are subject to an accreditation requirement under section 138(1) of the 2009 Act:

- GCSE Qualifications¹; and
- GCE Qualifications².

Some awarding organisations are also subject to an accreditation requirement under section 138(1) of the 2009 Act in respect of some or all of the qualifications (or descriptions of qualifications) they award or authenticate.

Qualifications accredited against previous criteria

Whenever we revise the accreditation criteria for a qualification (or description of qualification), we must either:

- set a date on which accreditations against previous criteria cease to have effect (section 140(6) of the 2009 Act); or
- determine that accreditations against previous criteria will not cease to have effect (section 140(8) of the 2009 Act).

We explain our decisions for all qualifications accredited against previous criteria in Appendix 1.

¹ In this document a ‘GCSE Qualification’ is a GCSE qualification, a GCSE short course qualification or a GCSE double award qualification. It includes both qualifications graded A* to G and qualifications graded 9 to 1.

² In this document a ‘GCE Qualification’ is an A level or an AS qualification.

Accreditation criterion

For a qualification which is subject to an accreditation requirement, the following criterion must be met:

An awarding organisation must demonstrate to Ofqual's satisfaction that it is capable of complying, on an on-going basis, with all of the General Conditions of Recognition that apply in respect of the qualification for which it is seeking accreditation, including all relevant Qualification Level Conditions and Subject Level Conditions.

For the purposes of accrediting a GCSE Qualification (graded from A* to G) in a particular subject, the 'relevant Qualification Level Conditions and Subject Level Conditions' include:

- the *GCSE (9 to 1) Qualification Level Conditions and Requirements*³; and
- any *GCSE Subject Level Conditions and Requirements* which apply to a GCSE Qualification (graded 9 to 1) in the same subject.

³ www.ofqual.gov.uk/documents/gcse-9-1-qualification-level-conditions

Appendix 1 – Qualifications accredited against previous criteria

Whenever we revise the accreditation criteria for a qualification (or description of a qualification), we must either:

- set a date on which accreditations against previous criteria cease to have effect (section 140(6) of the 2009 Act); or
- determine that accreditations against previous criteria will not cease to have effect (section 140(6) of the 2009 Act).

We set out below our decisions for the following descriptions of qualifications:

- GCSE Qualifications (graded from 9 to 1);
- GCSE Qualifications (graded from A* to G);
- GCE Qualifications; and
- all other qualifications.

Where appropriate, for example to provide re-sit opportunities for candidates, we will make saving and transitional provisions in connection with the cessation of the previous accreditations of any of these qualifications.

GCSE Qualifications (graded from 9 to 1)

The accreditation criterion set out in this document has applied to all GCSE Qualifications (graded from 9 to 1) since 19th June 2014.

This means all GCSE Qualifications (graded from 9 to 1) which were accredited prior to 1st November 2014 will remain accredited.

GCSE Qualifications (graded from A* to G)

For GCSE Qualifications (graded from A* to G), we are using our powers under section 140(6) of the 2009 Act to set an end date for existing accreditations.

In line with our previous decisions, GCSE Qualifications (graded from A* to G) in the following subjects will cease to be accredited on 31st August 2016:

- English
- English Language

- English Literature
- Mathematics

All other GCSE Qualifications (graded from A* to G) will cease to be accredited on 31st August 2017.

Once we have taken a decision on which GCSE Qualifications (graded from A* to G) will continue to be awarded in 2018, we will use our powers under section 140(7) of the Act to extend the accreditation end date for those qualifications.

GCE Qualifications

GCE Qualifications in Art and Design, Biology, Business, Chemistry, Computer Science, Economics, English Language, English Literature, English Language and Literature, History, Physics, Psychology and Sociology

The accreditation criterion set out in this document has applied to GCE Qualifications in the following subjects since 19th June 2014:

- Art and Design
- Biology
- Business
- Chemistry
- Computer Science
- Economics
- English Language
- English Literature
- English Language and Literature
- History
- Physics
- Psychology
- Sociology.

Because we are not changing the accreditation criterion for these qualifications, any such qualifications accredited on or after 19th June 2014 will remain accredited, and

existing provisions in relation to the cessation of prior accreditations for these qualifications remain in force.

This means that any GCE Qualifications in the subjects listed above which were accredited prior to 19th June 2014 will cease to be accredited on 31st August 2016, and that any GCE Qualifications which were accredited on or after 19th June 2014 will remain accredited.

GCE Qualifications in all other subjects

For GCE Qualifications in all other subjects, we are using our powers under section 140(6) of the 2009 Act to set an end date for existing accreditations.

GCE Qualifications in all other subjects will cease to be accredited on 31st August 2017.

Once we have taken a decision on which existing GCE Qualifications will continue to be awarded in 2018, we will use our powers under section 140(7) of the Act to extend the accreditation end date for those qualifications.

All other qualifications

To the extent that this document revises the accreditation criteria for any qualification which is not a GCSE Qualification or a GCE Qualification, we have, in accordance with section 140(8) of the 2009 Act, determined that the provisions of section 140(6) of the 2009 Act do not apply to this revision of those accreditation criteria.

This means all qualifications (except GCSE Qualifications and GCE Qualifications) which were accredited prior to 1st November 2014 will remain accredited.

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