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Guidance

Get the facts: GCSE reform

Published 16 December 2014

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Introduction

New GCSEs in English language, English literature and maths will be taught in schools in England from September 2015, with the first results issued in August 2017.

Further subjects will see new GCSEs introduced over the following two years.

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2.

What new GCSEs will look like

The main features of the new GCSEs are:

1. A new grading scale of 9 to 1 will be used, with 9 being the top grade. This will allow greater differentiation between students and will help distinguish the new GCSEs from previous versions.

2. Assessment will be mainly by exam, with other types of assessment used only where they are needed to test essential skills.

3. There will be new, more demanding content, which has been developed by government and the exam boards.

4. Courses will be designed for two years of study – they will no longer be divided into different modules and students will take all their exams in one period at the end of their course.

5. Exams can only be split into 'foundation tier' and 'higher tier' if one exam paper does not give all students the opportunity to show their knowledge and abilities.

6. Resit opportunities will only be available each November in English language and maths.

3.

Timetable

New GCSE to be taught from:	First results will be issued in:	Subjects
September 2015	Summer 2017	English language English literature

September 2016	Summer 2018	maths
September 2016	Summer 2018	geography history biology chemistry physics combined science modern foreign languages ancient languages religious studies design and technology cooking and nutrition art and design drama music dance physical education computer science citizenship studies
September 2017	Summer 2019	All other GCSE subjects taught from this point will be new, with the current ones withdrawn. Exam boards will have to meet new rules for content and design when deciding which subjects to offer. More information on available subjects will follow.

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