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Guidance

Get the facts: GCSE reform

Updated 14 May 2015

Contents

1. Introduction
2. What new GCSEs will look like
3. Timetable

1.

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.

[↑Contents](#)

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

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.

Timetable

3.

New GCSE to be taught from:	First results will be issued in:	Subjects
September 2015	Summer 2017	English language English literature mathematics
September 2016	Summer 2018	ancient languages (classical Greek, Latin) art and design biology chemistry citizenship studies computer science dance double science drama food preparation and nutrition geography history modern foreign languages (French, German, Spanish) music physics physical education religious studies
September 2017	Summer 2019	ancient history astronomy business classical civilisation design and technology economics electronics engineering film studies geology information and communications technology media studies psychology sociology statistics

Any subjects being listed as a new GCSE to be taught from September 2017

must have core content developed that meets our principles. Until the content is drafted, it is not possible to say for certain that all of the subjects listed above will be available to be taught from September 2017. You can find out more information about this in our [consultation decision documents](#)

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[Working, jobs and pensions](#)

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[How government works](#)

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