

Ofqual

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Decision

Recognition conditions for Oxford, Cambridge and RSA Examinations

Updated 24 August 2015

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1.

Reasons for recognition conditions

On 23 May 2014, we accepted Oxford, Cambridge and RSA Examinations' (OCR) application to be recognised for the new GCSE (9 to 1) qualifications.

At the same time, we decided to impose special conditions on OCR for those qualifications. This is because:

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- GCSE (9 to 1) qualifications are important qualifications. They will be used for the purposes of Learners moving to Higher Education and employment and for ‘school league tables’. But they are also fundamentally different from existing GCSE qualifications (graded A* to G).
- As part of its application for recognition OCR explained how it proposes to implement the development, delivery and award of GCSE (9 to 1) qualifications (its ‘Business Transformation Programme’ and ‘Implementation Plan’). These processes and practices have not yet been fully tested in operation.
- The successful completion of OCR’s Business Transformation Programme and Implementation Plan is extremely important to Learners and other anticipated Users of these qualifications.
- To maintain standards and public confidence in GCSE qualifications, we want to closely monitor OCR’s Business Transformation Programme and Implementation Plan and any changes to them.

2.

Recognition conditions

OCR’s recognition for the development, delivery and award of GCSE (9 to 1) qualifications is subject to the following Recognition Conditions.

We will review these conditions on or before 1st October 2016, and will remove them when they are no longer necessary.

2.1 Definitions

For the purposes of Recognition Conditions A5.6 and A5.7: -

‘Business Transformation Programme’ means:

- The changes planned and progress made by the awarding organisation to its systems, processes and procedures, including its ‘Strategic Implementation Programme’ and its ‘Change Programme’ across the organisation.

‘Implementation Plan’ means:

- The plans submitted by the awarding organisation as part of its application for recognition for GCSE 9-1 qualifications for the implementation of the development, delivery and award of GCSE 9-1 and any subsequent updates.

‘Change of Significance’ means:

- Failure or anticipated failure to meet key milestones identified in its Business Transformation Programme or Implementation Plan;
- Any variation of the finances or other resources available to the awarding organisation, however arising, which is likely to have a direct effect on its ability to deliver its Business Transformation Programme or Implementation Plan;
- Any malfunction, lack of functionality or similar issues in its Information Technology (‘IT’) arrangements including, where relevant: the implementation of new IT systems or the adaptation or modification of existing IT systems to meet the requirements for marking and monitoring examination scripts and award of qualifications; and the development and implementation of systems for the automatic generation of question papers for each subject.
- Any inability to appoint and/ or train sufficient staff or contractors in respect of any aspects of the development and award of GCSE 9-1 qualifications including but not limited to its arrangements with those appointed to mark examination scripts, act as reviewers or lead examiners within the timescale set out in its Implementation Plan;

- Adverse changes on its risk register or risk log in relation to matters included in its Business Transformation Programme or Implementation Plan.
- Any anticipated variation of more than 10% increase or decrease or such percentage to be agreed by the Director of Regulatory Operations, when compared to its 2013 GCSE candidate numbers for any subject.

2.2 Condition A5.6

A5.6(1) The awarding organisation must provide Ofqual with an up to date copy of its Implementation Plan identifying its key milestones, together with a copy of the relevant risk register or risk log in relation to these issues by Monday 2nd June 2014.

A5.6(2) The awarding organisation must monitor its Implementation Plan and notify Ofqual:

- i) on a quarterly basis – from end of June 2014 or such timescale agreed by the Director of Regulatory Operations of its progress against its Implementation Plan together with a copy of the updated plan where relevant, and
- ii) of any Change of Significance which may cause key milestones in its Implementation Plan to be delayed, for more than a week or such period as agreed with the Director of Regulatory Operations together with its proposals for addressing any issues identified to ensure it is able to complete its Implementation Plan within the timescale proposed.

A5.6(3) Following receipt of the information provided in Condition A5.6(2) the awarding organisation shall attend a meeting to discuss the progress of its Implementation Plan, where requested by the Director of Regulatory Operations.

A5.6(4) The awarding organisation shall notify Ofqual in advance of its proposed meetings of its Governing Body where the progress of its Implementation Plan is to be discussed and shall, where requested, permit a member of staff to attend such meetings as an observer.

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