

GCSE (9 to 1) Qualification Level Conditions and Requirements

April 2016

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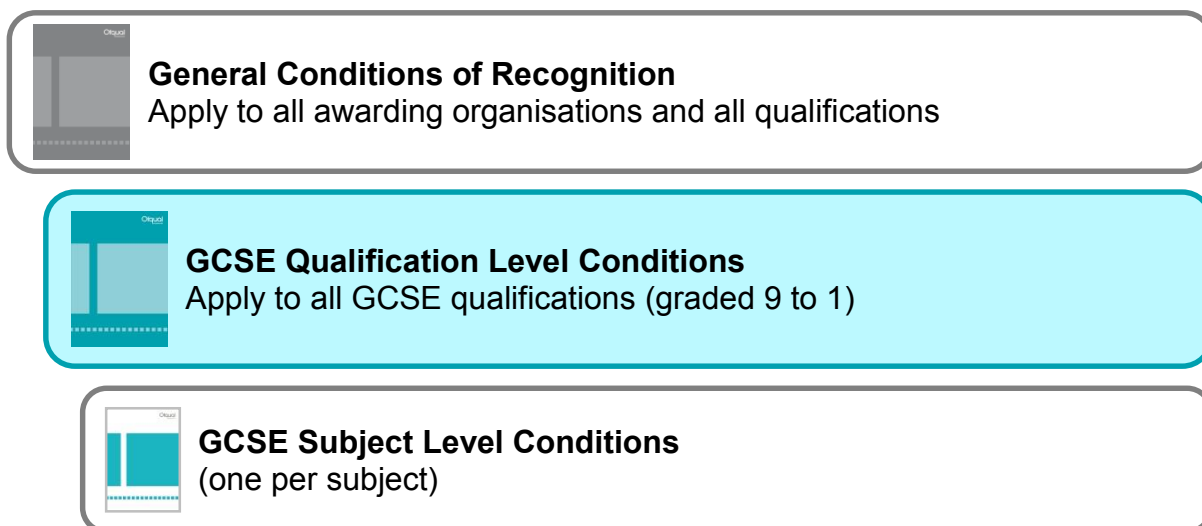
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Introduction

About this document

This document (highlighted in the figure below) is part of a suite of documents which sets out the regulatory requirements for awarding organisations offering GCSE qualifications (graded from 9 to 1).



We have developed these requirements with the intention that GCSE qualifications (graded from 9 to 1) should fulfil the following purposes:

- To provide evidence of students' achievements against demanding and fulfilling content;
- To provide a strong foundation for further academic and vocational study and for employment; and
- To provide (if required) a basis for schools and colleges to be held accountable for the performance of all of their students.

Requirements set out in this document

This document sets out the GCSE Qualification Level Conditions. These conditions apply to all GCSE qualifications (graded from 9 to 1).

With respect to these qualifications, awarding organisations must also comply with:

- our *General Conditions of Recognition*,¹ which apply to all awarding organisations and qualifications;
- our *GCSE Subject Level Conditions*,² which apply to GCSE qualifications (graded 9 to 1) in that subject; and
- all relevant Regulatory Documents.

With respect to GCSE qualifications graded from A* to G, awarding organisations must continue to comply with the General Conditions of Recognition, and the relevant Regulatory Documents.³

Revisions to this document

We have revised this document since it was originally published (see Appendix 1 for details), most recently in April 2016.

The April 2016 version of this document replaces all previous versions of *GCSE (9 to 1) Qualification Level Conditions and Requirements* with effect from 10.01am on Tuesday 12 April 2016; it includes the following new and amended Conditions:

- GCSE8 – Use of Calculators (new)
- GCSE9 – Interpretation and Definitions (amended and renumbered)

¹ www.ofqual.gov.uk/documents/general-conditions-of-recognition

² www.ofqual.gov.uk/how-we-regulate/regulatory-requirements/gcses-9-1/#qualification-requirements

³ www.ofqual.gov.uk/documents/list-of-additional-regulatory-documents

Summary of requirements

Qualification Level Conditions	
GCSE1	Assessing the full range of abilities
GCSE2	Assessment strategies
GCSE3	Specified levels of attainment
GCSE4	Assessment by Examination
GCSE5	Question types
GCSE6	Timing of assessments
GCSE7	[not used]
GCSE8	Use of Calculators
GCSE9	Interpretation and Definitions

Qualification Level Conditions

GCSE Qualification Level Conditions

Condition GCSE1 Assessing the full range of abilities

- GCSE1.1 In designing and setting an assessment for a GCSE Qualification which it makes available, or proposes to make available, an awarding organisation must ensure that the assessment allows each specified level of attainment set out in the specification to be reached by a Learner who has attained the required level of knowledge, skills and understanding.
- GCSE1.2 Condition GCSE1.1 does not apply in respect of a GCSE Qualification where a GCSE Subject Level Condition states that its application is excluded in respect of that qualification.

Condition GCSE2 Assessment strategies

- GCSE2.1 In respect of each GCSE Qualification which it makes available, or proposes to make available, an awarding organisation must –
- (a) establish and maintain an assessment strategy for that qualification,
 - (b) ensure that the assessment strategy complies with any requirements which may be published by Ofqual and revised from time to time, and
 - (c) have regard to any guidance in relation to assessment strategies which may be published by Ofqual and revised from time to time.
- GCSE2.2 In particular, an awarding organisation must ensure that the assessment strategy for a GCSE Qualification sets out how the awarding organisation intends to secure, on an ongoing basis, compliance with its Conditions of Recognition in respect of the assessments for that qualification.
- GCSE2.3 An awarding organisation must ensure that all assessments for a GCSE Qualification which it makes available, or proposes to make available, are designed, set, delivered and marked in compliance with its assessment strategy for that qualification.
- GCSE2.4 An awarding organisation must –
- (a) keep under review its assessment strategy for a GCSE Qualification, and revise it where necessary, so as to satisfy itself that the assessment strategy meets at all times the requirements of Conditions GCSE2.1 and GCSE2.2,
 - (b) review its assessment strategy for a GCSE Qualification promptly upon receiving a request from Ofqual to do so, and subsequently ensure that its assessment strategy complies with any requirements that Ofqual has communicated to it in writing, and
 - (c) promptly notify Ofqual of any revisions made by it to any assessment strategy.
- GCSE2.5 An awarding organisation must –
- (a) upon receiving a request from Ofqual to do so, demonstrate to Ofqual's satisfaction that it has complied with its assessment strategy for a GCSE Qualification in respect of any particular

assessment for that qualification, or provide an explanation to Ofqual as to why it has not so complied, and

- (b) give effect to any recommendation that Ofqual may make in respect of its compliance with its assessment strategy.

Condition GCSE3 Specified levels of attainment

GCSE3.1 An awarding organisation must ensure that the specification for each GCSE Qualification which it makes available or proposes to make available sets out specified levels of attainment which comply with any requirements which may be published by Ofqual and revised from time to time.

Condition GCSE4 Assessment by Examination

GCSE4.1 An awarding organisation must ensure that every assessment for a GCSE Qualification which it makes available is an Assessment by Examination.

GCSE4.2 Condition GCSE4.1 does not apply in respect of a GCSE Qualification where a GCSE Subject Level Condition states that its application is excluded in respect of that qualification.

Condition GCSE5 Question types

- GCSE5.1 In designing and setting the assessments for a GCSE Qualification which it makes available, or proposes to make available, an awarding organisation must ensure that taken together, those assessments include questions or tasks which allow Learners to –
- (a) provide extended responses, and
 - (b) demonstrate their ability to draw together different areas of knowledge, skills and/or understanding from across a full course of study for that qualification.
- GCSE5.2 In designing and setting the assessments for a GCSE Qualification which it makes available, or proposes to make available, an awarding organisation must ensure that Learners are appropriately rewarded for providing such responses and demonstrating such an ability.
- GCSE5.3 The requirements in Condition GCSE5.1 may be met within the same question or task, or different questions or tasks.
- GCSE5.4 For the purposes of Condition GCSE5.1(a) an ‘extended response’ is evidence generated by a Learner which is of sufficient length to allow that Learner to demonstrate the ability to construct and develop a sustained line of reasoning which is coherent, relevant, substantiated and logically structured.

Condition GCSE6 Timing of assessments

- GCSE6.1 An awarding organisation must ensure that in respect of each GCSE Qualification which it makes available each Learner completes, during the months of May and June in any single year, the Assessments by Examination to be taken for that qualification.
- GCSE6.2 In respect of each GCSE Qualification which it makes available an awarding organisation must ensure that –
- (a) it issues a single result, or a single set of results, in respect of each Learner following completion by that Learner of the assessments to be taken for that qualification,
 - (b) where confirmation of, or changes to, any mark for an assessment has been communicated to a Centre or a Learner in advance of the issue of that result or set of results, no further evidence generated by that Learner will be admissible as part of that assessment, and
 - (c) where any result for a unit has been communicated to a Centre or a Learner in advance of the issue of that result or set of results, no further evidence generated by that Learner will be admissible as part of the assessments for that unit.
- GCSE6.3 Condition GCSE6.1 does not apply in respect of a GCSE Qualification where a GCSE Subject Level Condition states that its application is excluded in respect of that qualification.

Condition GCSE7 [not used]

Condition GCSE8 Use of Calculators

- GCSE8.1 In respect of each GCSE Qualification which it makes available, or proposes to make available, in which an awarding organisation permits a Learner to use a Calculator while taking any Assessment by Examination it must –
- (a) publish its approach to Learners' use of Calculators in that Assessment by Examination, including any restrictions that it places on such use, and
 - (b) ensure that Assessment by Examination remains fit for purpose.

Condition GCSE9 Interpretation and Definitions

- GCSE9.1 The rules of interpretation and definitions outlined in General Condition J1 shall apply to the GCSE Qualification Level Conditions and GCSE Subject Level Conditions.
- GCSE9.2 Except in the circumstances described in Condition GCSE8.3, the requirements imposed by the GCSE Qualification Level Conditions and the GCSE Subject Level Conditions apply in addition to each other and to the requirements imposed by the General Conditions of Recognition.
- GCSE9.3 To the extent that there is any inconsistency between –
- (a) a requirement of a GCSE Subject Level Condition and a requirement of either a GCSE Qualification Level Condition or a General Condition of Recognition, such that an awarding organisation could not comply with both such requirements, the awarding organisation must comply with the requirement of the GCSE Subject Level Condition and is not obliged to comply with the requirement of the other Condition, or
 - (b) a requirement of a GCSE Qualification Level Condition and a requirement of a General Condition of Recognition, such that an awarding organisation could not comply with both such requirements, the awarding organisation must comply with the requirement of the GCSE Qualification Level Condition and is not obliged to comply with the requirement of the General Condition of Recognition.
- GCSE9.4 In these Conditions the following words shall have the meaning given to them below (and cognate expressions should be construed accordingly) –

Assessment by Examination

An assessment which is -

- (a) set by an awarding organisation,
- (b) designed to be taken simultaneously by all relevant Learners at a time determined by the awarding organisation, and
- (c) taken under conditions specified by the awarding organisation (including conditions relating to the supervision of Learners during the assessment and the duration of the assessment).

Calculator

Any electronic device which may be used for the performance of mathematical computations.

GCSE Qualification

A GCSE qualification, a GCSE short course qualification or a GCSE double award qualification.

GCSE Qualification Level Condition

A Condition of Recognition that applies to all GCSE qualifications, except where a GCSE Subject Level Condition states that its application is excluded in respect of a specific subject, and which uses the numbering format 'GCSEn.n', where 'n' denotes a number.

GCSE Subject Level Condition

A Condition of Recognition that applies to a GCSE qualification in a specific subject only and which uses the numbering format 'GCSE(x)n.n', where 'x' denotes a particular subject and 'n' denotes a number.

Appendix 1 – Revisions to this document

The table below sets out all revisions to this document since it was first published, and the dates on which those revisions came into force.

Revision	Date in force
<ul style="list-style-type: none">■ Condition GCSE8 – Use of Calculators (new)■ Condition GCSE9 – Interpretation and Definitions (amended and renumbered)	12 April 2016
First published	9 April 2014

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