Post 16

2001

Five year review of standards

GCSE physics

QCA
Guarding standards

Introduction

Every summer, the publication of GCSE and A level examination results prompts public interest in the standards of those examinations.

In 1996, Lord Dearing in his *Review of Qualifications for 16–19 Year Olds* made several recommendations to ensure that 'there is a basis and accepted procedure ... for monitoring and safeguarding standards over time'. In the same year, SCAA (one of QCA's predecessors) and the Office for Standards in Education jointly investigated standards in English, mathematics and science (chemistry) in 16+ and 18+ public examinations over time. [1]

The outcomes of this work were published in *Standards in Public Examinations 1975 to 1995*. One of the recommendations was that there should be:

'... a rolling programme of reviews on a five-year cycle to ensure examination demands and grade standards are being maintained in all major subjects. Physics, history, French and German should be included in the programme at an early stage.'

The five-yearly review of standards programme is a response to these recommendations. It is run by QCA in collaboration with the regulatory authorities for Wales and Northern Ireland, ACCAC and CCEA, and is designed to investigate the standards in A level and GCSE examinations. It aims to find out if:

the demand of syllabuses and their assessment instruments has changed over the last 20 years (examination demand);

the level of performance required of candidates at grade boundaries has changed over the last 20 years (grade standard).

Organised to run in five-year cycles, the programme was structured to cover every major subject during its first cycle. Each year, up to 100 independent specialists review around 2,000 exam scripts, drawn from all the awarding bodies, together with their associated syllabuses, question papers and mark schemes.[2]

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[1] 16+ examinations cover GCE O level and Certificate of Secondary Education (up to 1987), and GCSE (from 1988).

[2] For the purposes of this report, the general term *awarding bodies* is used to cover both the A level examination boards and the GCSE examining groups.

Methodology

Each study was organised in two stages:

- stage one – investigating changes in examination demand;
- stage two – investigating changes in standards of performance.

Each covered four sample years: the year of the study and its predecessors from five years, 10 years and 20 years earlier.

Stage one: examination demand

Aim

The aim of this review was to establish whether the demand of syllabuses and their assessment instruments changed over the period of the review.

Evidence base

The awarding bodies were asked to supply, for each subject, copies of one major syllabus from the most recent year and its predecessors for the other three years in the study. They were also asked to provide the related question papers, mark schemes, examiners' reports, and details of the procedures in operation at the time of each examination.

In general, syllabuses and question papers were available from all awarding bodies for all years in a study. Unfortunately, prior to 1988, few mark schemes and few documented details about awarding procedures had been retained.

The process

A coordinator and three reviewers – independent experts from a variety of backgrounds – were appointed for each subject. Each coordinator was given a framework and asked to use it to describe the main differences between the syllabuses from the different years. This description was given to the reviewers, who were asked to study the syllabuses, question papers and mark schemes and independently judge whether the differences between years affected the demand of the examination. After the material had been reviewed, the team for each subject area met and discussed any issues. The coordinator then reported on the findings and identified any conclusions.

Stage two: standards of performance

Aim

The aim of the second stage was to find out if the level of performance required of candidates at grade boundaries has changed over the period of the study. The review focused on the performance of candidates at grades A and E at A level, and grades A, C and, sometimes, F for 16+ examinations.

Evidence base

The awarding bodies were asked to provide 15 examples of candidates' work at the defined boundaries for each syllabus studied in stage one. They were asked to submit the complete examination work of candidates, including all examination papers, coursework and any oral examinations.

On the whole, the samples provided for the most recent year of each study were complete. However, the coursework was sometimes missing and work from modular syllabuses presented a problem, in that it was seldom possible to provide the entire work of individual candidates. Usually, several modules from one candidate were provided, supplemented by modules from other candidates to produce the appropriate overall result.

Samples of work from earlier years were much less complete. The awarding bodies could rarely provide work from enough candidates or did not have the complete work of candidates – coursework and orals were usually missing and the work consisted of individual components. No work from the earliest year of the reviews was available.

The process

A team of up to 12 reviewers was recruited for each subject. The reviewers came from a variety of backgrounds, including universities, selective and non-selective schools, maintained and independent schools, and further education institutions (including sixth form colleges). Some of them had backgrounds working for the various awarding bodies.

The coordinator from stage one was used again in this stage and the syllabus reviewers normally participated.

The review took place over two days. Before the meeting, each coordinator produced a general description of the standards expected for the grade boundaries in the study. Where these were available, published grade descriptions normally formed the basis of the performance descriptors. The coordinators were asked to take into account the fact that they would be looking at borderline performance rather than that comfortably in grade which is the intention of grade descriptions. The performance descriptors were discussed and agreed by the team at the start of the meeting.

Reviewers were each given a batch of scripts for a particular year, grade and awarding body. Working independently, they were asked to judge if the scripts matched the agreed grade description. They could categorise the work as:

- above the expected standard;
- slightly above the expected standard;
- at the expected standard;
- slightly below the expected standard;
- below the expected standard.

They were then given another batch of scripts of the same grade, either from another awarding body or of a different year from the same awarding body. They categorised these scripts and compared them with the first batch to identify any significant differences between candidates' performance. A sampling framework ensured adequate coverage of the sample. A copy of part of one framework is provided on page 5.

At the end of the two days, a plenary session was held and the reviewers discussed their findings and any significant issues. As with stage one, the coordinator reported on the findings and conclusions.

Limitations of the study

Comparing examination standards over time is a complex task, heavily dependent on the evidence available and the ability of reviewers to make valid judgements on it. When considering the findings and conclusions, several limitations need to be kept in mind.

Changes in syllabus and examination content

In some subject areas, syllabuses and examination papers changed radically over the period of the review. For example, in assessing modern foreign languages the relative importance of the skills of reading, writing, speaking and listening has changed considerably. Fundamental changes make it difficult for reviewers to make valid judgements about relative standards because they are not comparing like with like.

Individual opinion

Each individual places different values on each part of a subject. Agreed definitions of standards and frameworks show reviewers the standards they should work to, but it is difficult for them to avoid applying their own values. This can lead to differences in opinion about the same syllabus or piece of candidate's work.

Lack of evidence

While reviewers had syllabuses and examination papers (although not always mark schemes) for all the years in the study, they did not have all the evidence they needed to analyse standards of performance. The archiving practices of the awarding bodies vary, each keeping different amounts of evidence for any year. This applies particularly to examination scripts. What tended to be available from earlier years is work for separate components of the examination rather than the whole work of candidates. Coursework and any oral examinations were usually missing.

A national archive of essential evidence on examination standards has been established by the regulatory authorities. This should ensure that difficulties in this area are reduced in future studies.

Table 1: Sampling framework for part of a typical A level study

DAY 1

8:30	BOARD A, GRADE	BOARD A, GRADE	BOARD F, GRADE	BOARD F, GRADE	BOARD C, GRADE	BOARD C, GRADE
	A	E	A	E	A	E
10:00	1996	1996	1996	1996	1996	1996
	1-7	1-7	1-7	7-1	1-7	15-8
10:10	BOARD A, GRADE	BOARD A, GRADE	BOARD F, GRADE	BOARD F, GRADE	BOARD C, GRADE	BOARD C, GRADE
	A	E	E	A	A	E
11:30	1991	1991	1996	1996	1991	1991
	1-3	1-3	8-15	7-1	1-7	15-8
11:50	BOARD A, GRADE	BOARD A, GRADE	BOARD C, GRADE	BOARD C, GRADE	BOARD E, GRADE	BOARD D, GRADE
	E	A	E	A	A	A
1:05	1996	1996	1996	1996	1996	1996
	1-7	15-8	1-7	8-15	1-7	15-8
2:15	BOARD A, GRADE	BOARD A, GRADE	BOARD A, GRADE	BOARD B, GRADE	BOARD E, GRADE	BOARD D, GRADE
	E	A	E	E	E	E
3.30	1991	1991	1996	1996	1996	1996
	1-3	3-1	15-8	15-8	1-7	15-8
3:30	BOARD B, GRADE	BOARD D, GRADE	BOARD B, GRADE	BOARD D, GRADE	BOARD D, GRADE	BOARD E, GRADE
	A	E	A	E	A	A
4:45	1996	1996	1996	1991	1996	1996
	1-7	1-7	15-8	4-1	7-1	8-15
5:05	BOARD B, GRADE	BOARD D, GRADE	BOARD B, GRADE	BOARD D, GRADE	BOARD D, GRADE	BOARD E, GRADE
	E	E	E	E	E	A
6:20	1996	1991	1996	1986	1996	1991
	1-7	1-4	8-15	4-1	8-15	1-3

DAY 2

8:30	BOARD C, GRADE	BOARD E, GRADE	BOARD E, GRADE	EDEC , GRADE A	BOARD F, GRADE	BOARD A, GRADE
	E	E	A	1996	A	E
9:45	1996	1996	1996	7-1	1996	1996
	7-1	15-8	1-7		8-15	15-8
9:45	BOARD C, GRADE	BOARD E, GRADE	BOARD E, GRADE	BOARD B, GRADE	BOARD F, GRADE	BOARD A, GRADE
	E	E	A	E	E	E
11:00	1991	1991	1991	1996	1996	1986
	1-7	3-1	3-1	8-15	8-15	7-1
11:20	BOARD C, GRADE	BOARD E, GRADE	BOARD E, GRADE	BOARD E, GRADE	BOARD C, GRADE	BOARD A, GRADE
	A	A	E	A	A	A
12:35	1996	1996	1996	1996	1996	1996
	7-1	7-1	8-15	8-15	15-8	1-7
1:45	BOARD C, GRADE	BOARD E, GRADE	BOARD E, GRADE	BOARD E, GRADE	BOARD C, GRADE	BOARD A, GRADE
	A	A	E	A	A	A
3:00	1991	1991	1991	1991	1991	1991
	7-1	1-3	1-3	3-1	15-8	3-1

GCSE Physics: review of standards 1977–97

Introduction

Changes in 16+ physics examinations between 1977 and 1997 were influenced by a number of key events, including:

- the development in 1985 of national criteria for assessing physics at GCSE, followed by the introduction of GCSE examinations in 1988;
- the introduction in 1991 of a national curriculum for science leading to revised GCSE criteria and, in 1995, new syllabuses for physics.

These developments led to significant changes in assessment patterns, making comparisons difficult, but there was sufficient continuity in the nature of the subject content for reviewers to feel fairly confident about their judgements.

Examination demand

Materials available

The reviewers used syllabuses, question papers and mark schemes from physics syllabuses in 1977, 1987, 1992 and 1997, although not all these materials were available from the three earlier years. In some cases, examiner's reports allowed reviewers further insight into the expectations of the examination. Annex A shows in detail the materials used.

Between them the syllabuses in 1997 included in this study attracted about 91 per cent of the 45,000 candidates for GCSE Physics.

Syllabus changes

The main change over time was the progressively more detailed information given in the syllabuses relating to aims and assessment objectives. Aims and objectives have moved away from stressing basic physical concepts towards applications and a greater emphasis on practical work. The requirements for mathematical knowledge have remained broadly static. Apart from the provision of an equation sheet, or a similar aid, in 1992 by most of the awarding bodies, which had the effect of reducing demand for that year, none of the above factors was judged to have had any significant effect on the demands of the examinations over time.

Knowledge, understanding and skills

There was a progressive reduction in the proportion of marks awarded for recall, with a corresponding rise in the proportion given to understanding and process skills. In particular, there were substantial changes in the weight given to practical assessment. Here, the demands rose progressively from none in 1977 to the situation in 1997, when the component carried 25 per cent of the overall weight and

required students to make predictions supported by hypotheses based on their scientific knowledge and understanding.

Content

The breadth of syllabus content was maintained by most of the awarding bodies. In some cases, the breadth was increased, but this was at the expense of depth in the topics covered. For example, there was a reduction in demand in the coverage of electricity, but the topic of noise and its measurement and monitoring appeared in 1987 in the AQA/N syllabus and in 1997 in the syllabuses of the other awarding bodies. The requirements of the national curriculum led to the inclusion of plate tectonics and the Earth in space, and to the removal of some of the more difficult mechanics topics. The study of electronic systems was introduced for 1992, but removed by 1997. In 1997, no awarding body required the quantitative study of series and parallel resistors, but most had included sections dealing, mainly qualitatively, with waves and photons.

Question papers

For most awarding bodies in 1977, syllabus coverage by the examination was inadequate. This situation arose because the papers consisted of 12 to 15 long questions from which candidates had to choose, say, five to answer. The use of long questions, each on a single topic, meant that it was impossible to cover the syllabus and that candidates who could predict questions from one year to the next could score well on the examination without having to cover the entire syllabus. The use of objective testing and more shorter questions, coupled with reduction in choice of questions, improved syllabus coverage in later years. Coverage in 1997 was considered less satisfactory than in 1992, with some topics left untested. This was the case, for example, in the AQA/N examination, which had a single theory component consisting of 14 short questions. The OCR examination used only 15 questions and coverage here was also considered insufficient.

Skills and processes

For AQA/A, CCEA and OCR, the proportion of simple recall required increased between 1992 and 1997, with a corresponding fall in demand. For CCEA, this reduction was found especially in the Higher Tier. With other skills, the demand either remained unchanged or increased. In particular, there was increased testing of the skills of communication, translation of data from one form to another, and practical skills. OCR introduced a short comprehension passage on material not in the syllabus, thus requiring candidates to work with unfamiliar material.

Options

The issue of options is clouded by the variety of examination models used by the awarding bodies in different years and by the issue of question choice. In some cases, different optional components were not considered to make similar demands. For example, the use in 1992 by Edexcel of a written practical test as an alternative to a practical examination was judged a more demanding route. Only in the 1997 examination was there consistency of structure, governed by national criteria.

Assessment components

A wide range of assessment components was used over the review period. The time allocation also varied widely, generally being reduced. The demand of the practical component increased progressively, with the greatest demand being made in 1997, when a full range of practical skills was tested. For AQA/N and OCR, the reduction in testing time was judged to have reduced demand in 1997 and, for CCEA, the Higher Tier examination was considered insufficiently demanding in the area of higher skills. The pattern of assessment for 1997 was surprisingly varied across the awarding bodies, considering that all were working to the same criteria. The level of variation among awarding bodies was considered sufficient to lead to differences in demand. Some of these differences related to the time allocated for assessment. For example, assessment at the Higher Tier ranged from two hours 15 minutes to three hours. At the Foundation Tier, the range was even wider, between one hour 30 minutes and two hours 30 minutes. In addition, there was some variation in the material added to that in Double Award Science to form the content of the physics syllabuses.

Presentation of papers and mark schemes

Presentation of papers had improved in the use of diagrams, the provision of spaces for candidates to write their answers and a general increase in user-friendliness. These features had made examinations fairer and more accessible to candidates, as had the publication of clear mark schemes.

Summary

The reviewers considered that the demands of the examination as a whole increased from 1977 to 1987 and 1992. In the latter two years, the examinations were very different, and it was not possible to say in which the demand was greater. The main contributory factors to increased demand were the practical component and the progressive movement away from simple recall towards higher process skills. However, the increased use of recall and the reduction in overall examining time in 1997 meant that, for some awarding bodies, examination demand fell in this examination, though it was still greater than in 1977.

Standards at grade A and grade C

Materials available

Reviewers considered candidates' work from all the awarding bodies in 1997, and in much more limited quantities from 1992 and 1987. The details of what was used are provided in Annex A.

The descriptions of expected performance used in this exercise were developed from published grade descriptions, adjusted to take into account the fact that the work was from borderline candidates.

Standards expected at grade A

Candidates at grade A were expected to recall a wide range of knowledge from most areas of the syllabus and to be able to use their knowledge and understanding in a variety of ways. They should:

- carry out confidently calculations involving electrical circuits, show sound understanding of radioactivity, waves, the electromagnetic spectrum and solve problems involving the principle of conservation of energy;
- make good use of an extensive scientific vocabulary and communicate ideas effectively and accurately using appropriate scientific and mathematical conventions;
- be adept at handling data and working with graphs.

Performance at grade A

For the 1997 CCEA, OCR and Edexcel examinations, candidates were judged to have at least matched the expected standard for grade A. In general, the candidates demonstrated wide knowledge of the subject and ability to apply that understanding. Their graph work was also successful. Some of the OCR candidates performed well above expectation, successfully handling refraction and kinetic energy.

For the 1997 examinations from WJEC, AQA/A, AQA/N, candidates' performance was less successful in meeting the criteria. There was too little consistency, with insufficient understanding of conservation of energy, momentum and charge. Recall was also sometimes limited and data-handling skills below the expected standard.

In the WJEC O level examination in 1987, candidates were judged to have matched or exceeded the grade A criteria. These candidates worked competently in the areas of vector resolution, momentum and the operation of the dynamo. However, performance in the three examinations from 1992/3 was judged to below expectation. In the case of the 1992 AQA/A and WJEC examinations, it was noted that the question papers did not give candidates sufficient opportunity to demonstrate their abilities. The OCR candidates in 1993 did not perform with the necessary consistency.

Standards expected at grade C

Candidates were expected:

- to recall some information from a range of syllabus topics and to be able to carry out routine calculations, quoting correct units for the physical quantities involved;
- successfully identify patterns in data and convert information from one form to another.

Performance at grade C

In the 1997 AQA/N and CCEA examinations, candidates were judged to have met the grade C description. In the AQA/N papers, candidates were able to show ability to use their knowledge in relatively straightforward calculations involving, for example, *wave speed = frequency* x *wavelength* and *distance = speed* x *time.* However, explanations in questions targeting higher levels of understanding of X-rays and resonance were poor. Candidates from CCEA showed quite a wide and well-balanced range of knowledge and skills. They undertook consistently correct routine (and some non-routine) calculations and gave concise explanations of ideas and phenomena. Some of these candidates were judged by their work to be achieving above the expected standard.

In the remainder of the 1997 examinations performance was judged below the standard expected, usually because performance was patchy, with some aspects met and others not. Candidates from OCR performed some calculations accurately, but their written explanations lacked depth and showed inadequate use of appropriate scientific vocabulary. On AQA/A papers, candidates scored well on mechanics but poorly on refraction and heat-energy transfer. Recall of some basic facts, such as the basic properties of waves, was weak. In the 1997 WJEC papers, candidates should have performed better than they did, given the straightforward nature of the questions and the limited range of knowledge tested. Simple recall was demonstrated only in some limited areas of the syllabus and candidates showed poor ability to use their knowledge in explanations. Papers from Edexcel in 1997 allowed candidates to achieve a grade C without carrying out any calculations, and performance on the straightforward questions was not strong. Explanations and arguments were limited by poor use of English and there were large gaps in knowledge.

In the examinations set by AQA/A in 1992 and WJEC in 1992 and 1987, performance was matched to grade C criteria. Candidates for the 1992 AQA/A examination showed good recall, but patchy success with quantitative relationships. Some candidates could tackle some of the more difficult questions quite successfully. Grade C performance in WJEC papers in 1987 and 1992 was characterised by fairly confident handling of quantitative relationships in contexts familiar to the candidates. Data handling was generally good and candidates showed a sound knowledge of technical vocabulary. In contrast, the 1992 OCR examination gave candidates insufficient opportunity to show their ability to cope with quantitative work and they were judged not to have met the expected standard.

Consistency across tiers

The structure of GCSE examinations in 1992 and 1997 meant that it was possible for candidates to achieve the same grade by different routes. The reviewers scrutinised sets of scripts that had been awarded the same grade but on different tiers. It was not possible to make comparisons for all awarding bodies across all tiers. Comparisons across tiers were made for Edexcel, AQA/A and WJEC at grade A, and for AQA/N, CCEA and WJEC (for 1992) at grade C. Reviewers focused performance comparison on questions common to more than one tier. However, the proportion of

such marks varied considerably between awarding bodies. As a result, much of the comparison was made on non-common material.

At grade A, no significant differences were seen overall, although some differences were noted in the ways in which candidates achieved their grades. For Edexcel, both sets of candidates were judged to have met the expected standard. The papers gave Intermediate candidates less chance to show their calculation expertise, but the standard of response was good in the questions that did have mathematical content. With WJEC, the performance of candidates was judged to be a little below the standard expected at grade A, but Intermediate candidates were judged to have performed at least as well as Higher candidates. Recall was over as wide a range as at the Higher Tier and their application of their knowledge and understanding was equally good. Higher Tier candidates did not always successfully meet the greater demands of their papers. With AQA/A, some variation in performance was seen. Candidates for the Higher Tier were more secure in their use of technical vocabulary and data handling, but the answers on radioactivity given by Intermediate candidates were judged to be better. Calculations and explanations were of a similar standard for both tiers. On balance, the two examinations appeared to offer comparable routes to a grade A.

There were, however, some differences between the grade C awards across tiers. For Edexcel, candidates taking the Higher papers had many problems with quantitative questions, gaining a grade C with low marks and many gaps in their knowledge. The work of these candidates showed a poorer match to the expected standard than the candidates entered for the Intermediate Tier. Candidates at Higher Tier for WJEC in 1992 met the expected standard, but the performance of candidates in the Foundation Tier papers was judged to be below that required for a grade C. In the CCEA examination, the performance of candidates for the Higher Tier was judged to be better matched to expectation. For example, they were more competent at completing and analysing circuit diagrams and calculating acceleration. There was, however, some evidence from the structure of the papers that the Higher Tier candidates had opportunities to demonstrate skills and understanding not available to Intermediate Tier candidates. For AQA/N, performance on the Higher and Intermediate tiers was broadly comparable but there were differences in the ways in which candidates had achieved their grade. Intermediate candidates displayed better recall than their Higher counterparts, but the latter were better able to show their skills in consequence of the questions on the Higher Tier papers being wider ranging.

Summary

Over time, performance at grade A in WJEC was at its highest in 1987, with that in 1992 and 1997 broadly comparable. At grade C, performance in 1987 and 1992 was considered comparable, but that in 1997 was judged to be lower. With AQA/A, performance at grade A was a little better in 1997 than in 1992, and no pattern of differences was found for grade C. Similarly, with OCR, performance at grade A in the 1997 examination was considered better than in 1992, with explanations, the use

of scientific knowledge and the ability to identify patterns in data much better demonstrated than in 1992. At grade C, performance was judged to be comparable.

In 1997, there was appropriate grading for CCEA candidates at both grades, for candidates from OCR and Edexcel at grade A only, and for AQA/N candidates at grade C only. AQA/A and WJEC candidates were below expectations at both grades.

At grade A, performance across tiers was broadly comparable. At grade C, however, there were some differences found between tiers within an awarding body. There was, however, no pattern suggesting that one route required consistently higher performance than another.

Annex A; materials used in the review

Table A1 shows the materials available for the review of examination demand.

Awarding body	AQA/N	AQA/A	CCEA	EDEXCEL	OCR	WJEC
1997						
Syllabus	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Question papers	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Mark scheme	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
1992						
Syllabus	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Question papers	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Mark scheme		✓		✓	✓	
1987						
Syllabus	✓	✓		✓	✓	
Question papers	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓
Mark scheme						
1977						
Syllabus	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓
Question papers	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓
Mark scheme						

Table A1: materials available for the syllabus reviewTable A2 shows the materials available for the script review.

Awarding body		AQA/N	AQA/A	CCEA	EDEXCEL	OCR	WJEC
1997	**Grade A**	15	HT 15 IT 15	14	15	12	HT 15 IT 15
GCSE	**Grade C**	HT 15 IT 15	IT 15	HT 12 IT 13	HT 15 IT 15	15 IT	15 IT
	Grade F	IT 10 FT 15					1 FT
1992	**Grade A**		5			3	6
GCSE	**Grade C**		5			3	HT 6 FT 6
	Grade F					3	3
1987	**Grade A**						6
O level	**Grade C**						6
1977	**Grade A**						
O level	**Grade C**						

Table A2: Numbers of scripts available for the script review

Notes:

The OCR scripts were from 1993 rather than 1992.

Key to the awarding bodies

During the period of the reviews, the number of awarding bodies operating fell. There are currently five: AQA, CCEA, Edexcel, OCR and WJEC. However, the three English awarding bodies came together through a number of mergers and a government requirement for unitary awarding bodies which could offer the range of GCSE, A level and GNVQ/VCE qualifications. This means that the qualifications used in the reviews came from a number of earlier examination boards and examining groups.

For the purposes of the reports the following abbreviations will be used:

AQA/A, AQA/N, CCEA, Edexcel, OCR and WJEC.

AQA/A covers AQA legacy A level syllabuses offered by AEB; legacy GCSE syllabuses offered by SEG; and O level syllabuses offered by AEB.

AQA/N covers AQA legacy A level syllabuses offered by NEAB, NEA and JMB; legacy GCSE syllabuses offered by NEAB and NEA; and O level syllabuses offered by JMB.

CCEA covers A level and GCSE syllabuses offered by CCEA, NISEAC and NISEC; and O level syllabuses offered by NISEC and NIGCEEB.

Edexcel covers A level and GCSE syllabuses offered by Edexcel, ULEAC and ULSEB; GCSE syllabuses offered by Edexcel, ULEAC and LEAG; and O level syllabuses offered by ULSEB.

OCR covers A level syllabuses offered by OCEAC, OCSEB, UCLES and UODLE; GCSE syllabuses offered by MEG; and O level syllabuses offered by OCSEB, UCLES and UODLE.

WJEC has retained the same name throughout the period.

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