

# A Quick Guide to GCSE Changes

## What is happening?

Starting in September 2015 the Department for Education has begun to introduce new 'Reformed' GCSEs to replace those that have been previously taught. Last year new GCSE's were introduced in English Language, English Literature and Mathematics, with the first exams in these subjects being sat by students in June 2017.

Further subjects will see new GCSE's introduced over the next two years.

## How do these new 'Reformed' GCSEs differ from the ones that have been studied in the past?

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. *Only Maths, Science and Modern Foreign Languages will have tiered papers.*
6. Students not achieving a 'Pass' in GCSE English and Maths at school will be expected to re-sit these subjects as part of the Post-16 courses.

## Reformed GCSEs – a summary

First teaching	First examined	Subject	Tiering? (Y/N)	Non-Exam Assessment (if any)	Comments
From Sept 2015 <i>(Affecting current Yrs 11 and 10 and beyond)</i>	June 2017	<b>English Language</b>	None	None <i>(Previously 40%)</i>	Students will receive a separate reported grade for spoken language – this no longer forms part of the GCSE grade
		<b>English Literature</b>	None	None <i>(Previously 25%)</i>	
		<b>Mathematics</b>	Yes	None	
From Sept 2016 <i>(Affecting current Yr 10 and beyond)</i>	June 2018	<b>Science – Combined</b> <i>(This qualification replaces Core Science and Additional Science)</i>	Yes	None <i>(Previously Core Science and Additional Science each contained 25% controlled assessment)</i>	New subject: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Double award with grades from 9-9 to 1-1</li> <li>• 15% of exam marks test understanding of practical work</li> <li>• 20% of exam marks test maths skills</li> </ul>
		<b>Science – Separate Biology, Chemistry and Physics)</b>	Yes	None <i>(Previously 25%)</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• At least 8 mandatory practical activities must be completed in each Science</li> <li>• 15% of exam marks will test understanding of practical work in each subject</li> <li>• In each Science a percentage of the marks will test maths skills: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Biology 10%</li> <li>○ Chemistry 20%</li> <li>○ Physics 30%</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
		<b>Art</b>	No	100%	
		<b>Computer Science</b>	No	20%	
		<b>Dance</b>	No	60% <i>(Previously 80%)</i>	
		<b>Drama</b>	No	60%	
		<b>Food Preparation &amp; Nutrition</b>	No	50%	This is a new subject
		<b>French</b>	Yes	25% <i>(Previously 60%)</i>	
		<b>German</b>	Yes	25% <i>(Previously 60%)</i>	
		<b>Geography</b>	No	None <i>(Previously 25%)</i>	Schools are required to give students 'fieldwork opportunities'. At least 15% of exam marks will relate to 'fieldwork questions'
		<b>History</b>	No	None <i>(Previously 25%)</i>	
		<b>Music</b>	No	60% <i>(Previously 80%)</i>	
		<b>PE</b>	No	40% <i>(Previously 60%)</i>	
<b>RE</b>	No	None			