

From 2017, the first GCSEs English and maths underwent reform. In 2018, 17 further GCSEs will undergo reforms as the grading system moves from letters A*-G to a numerical 9 to 1 system, with 9 the highest grade.

Content of the new GCSEs is more challenging: new grades are being introduced to signal that these are reformed GCSEs, and to better differentiate between students of different abilities.

At school level, it is important to emphasise results of the reformed GCSEs cannot be compared with the old GCSEs.

The new grading structure is not directly equivalent to the A*-G system.

However, in the first year that each new GCSE subject is introduced, broadly the same proportion of students will achieve grades 1, 4, and 7 and above as would have achieved grades G, C and A and above respectively under the old system.

Fewer grade 9s will be awarded than A*s.

The government has decided to describe grade 4 as a 'standard pass' and grade 5 as a 'strong pass'.

A grade 4 and above is equivalent to a C and above: if pupils do not achieve this level they will be required to continue studying English and maths post-16. Where employers, FE providers and universities currently accept grade C, they are expected to continue recognising grade 4.

The grade 5 'strong pass' is used as a school performance measure. In school performance tables, the government will publish the proportion of students achieving grade 5 and above, and will publish the number achieving grade 4 and above as an additional measure. **This will not affect individual pupils.**

Grading new GCSEs from 2017 (Ofqual)

New grading structure	Current grading structure
9	
8	A*
7	A
6	
5	B
4	C
3	D
2	E
1	F
	G
U	U

Any questions?

ASCL member hotline

0116 299 1122 hotline@ascl.org.uk

Ofqual

0300 303 3344 Public.enquiries@ofqual.gov.uk

Resources and information

www.gov.uk/government/organisations/ofqual

Timeline of GCSE Reforms

2017: GCSE assessments in English language, English literature and maths were sat in the summer and graded 9 to 1. All other subjects were graded A*-G.

2018: assessments in another 17 reformed GCSEs will be sat for the first time under the 9 to 1 grading system, with GCSEs in community languages following in 2019. Reforms in GCSE science subjects are as follows:

- Students taking **separate science** GCSEs will be graded from 9 to 1 for each subject, with 9 being the highest grade.
- Students studying **combined science** will receive an award worth two GCSEs, consisting of two equal or adjacent grades from 9 to 1 (the highest from 9-9, 9-8, 8-8, 8-7, 7-7 to 1-1). If a student achieves different grades, the highest number will always be reported on the left.

These new grades are a further indication that GCSEs have been reformed, and are intended to better differentiate between students of different abilities.

Ofqual has published a timetable which can be read [here](#).

2019: all GCSEs will be graded 9 to 1.

These changes are only happening in England. Wales and Northern Ireland are not introducing the new 9 to 1 grading scale.

SUZANNE O'FARRELL
ASCL Curriculum and Assessment Specialist

Tw: @OfarrellSuzanne



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