

# QUALIFICATION REFORM: A GUIDE TO WHAT IS HAPPENING AROUND THE UK

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# INTRODUCTION

The last few years have seen the introduction of a range of new and reformed versions of qualifications across the UK. This reform has been extensive, encapsulating academic, vocational, and technical education.

We are also seeing increased diversity of qualifications of the same title. The end of the tri-partite agreement between England, Wales, and Northern Ireland means that reforms to GCSEs and A levels will result in structurally different qualifications in different parts of the UK. Equally, the flexibility offered by the Curriculum for Excellence in Scotland, and the decoupling of the AS from the A level in England, means that secondary schools and colleges are likely to offer increasingly diverse programmes to their students.

These reforms have brought with them challenges for higher education providers, schools, and colleges – in terms of understanding the range of provision available to a student, how this may change the skills, knowledge, and aptitudes developed throughout the course of a qualification, and how these changes may impact on the information available to higher education providers during the admissions process.

The 2017 entry cycle was the first time students holding reformed A levels across the UK applied to higher education (HE). This meant applicants from England presented a mixed portfolio of reformed, decoupled AS and A levels, and unreformed, coupled A levels. However, the phased introduction of these reforms means significant numbers of applicants will continue to present similar profiles for the next few cycles. Equally, the introduction of Applied General and Tech Level qualifications in England meant that applicants presented larger versions of fundamentally different vocational qualifications from the 2018 entry cycle. This is further complicated by the continued dual running of the historic version.

Reform to qualifications continues in to 2019 and beyond. In England, the Post-16 Skills Plan outlined the intention to develop T-Levels, initially in 15 sector areas. Three T Level pathways (digital production, design and development; design, surveying and planning; and education) will be delivered by 54 selected colleges across England from 2020, with more pathways becoming available annually. T Levels signal another significant shift in post-16 education, with students presented with an academic (primarily A level) route and a technical (T Level or apprenticeship) route.

The Government's intention to review post-16 qualifications, except A levels and T Levels, in England in 2019 could impact on the choice of qualifications available at Level 3, and we will disseminate further information about the scope and impact of this once it is known.

UCAS has taken a central role in communicating intelligence regarding qualifications and qualification reform, seeking to keep the HE, FE, and secondary sectors informed of developments, and working with them to navigate these significant changes. In addition to raising awareness through conferences and events, UCAS has also produced a range of resources for providers, teachers and advisers, and students, to explain qualification reform, and its impact on progression to higher education. These include survey work, guides, and additional resources, which can be found on our qualification reform and applying to HE with reformed qualifications web pages.

Our latest Qualification Provision Survey identified that:

- > 55% of respondents will not offer the AS at all in the 2017/18 academic year. In the 2016/17 survey, this was 36%.
- > 14% are offering the AS in all reformed subjects, and 29% in some. Our previous survey indicated that 29% would offer the AS in all subjects, and 30% in some.
- > 55% of respondents are delivering a reformed specification, however an additional 35% are dual running both reformed and unreformed specifications.
- > 23% of respondents do not feel that HE providers have a good understanding of these qualifications, a slight increase on 2016/17 (22%). No respondents indicated that providers had no understanding, an improvement on 2017.
- > In Scotland, 57% of respondents do not have a policy for students bypassing National 5 qualifications, and 38% allow bypassing by individual students.
- > 85% of respondents in Wales offer the Advanced Skills Challenge Certificate. Of those respondents, 69% offer it alongside two A levels, and 24% alongside three.
- > 80% of respondents felt that universities and colleges have a good to reasonable understanding of qualification reform in Northern Ireland, however, the qualitative comments raised concerns about HEP understanding of changes to GCSE grading.

The information in this document is intended to provide a high-level overview of what is happening throughout the UK. It covers:

- > a summary timetable of qualification reform across the UK
- > statements published by universities and colleges about qualification reform and admissions
- > how the reference can be used to inform higher education providers of qualification provision
- > information about qualification reform in England, Northern Ireland, Wales, and Scotland, and how this may impact on progression and admissions to higher education

# KEY CHANGES FOR 2019

## England

- > continued rollout of reformed A levels and GCSEs, including geology with a practical element
- > a significant number of 9-1 GCSEs entering higher education
- > further vocational qualification reform, including preparations for the rollout of T Levels, the outcomes of the Level 4/5 review, and the two-stage consultation for the Post-16 qualifications review

## Northern Ireland

- > the introduction of the C\* grade for CCEA GCSEs, and the realignment of other grades to the numeric scale in England

## Scotland

- > the increased number of reformed Advanced Higher and Higher qualifications used for entering higher education

## Wales

- > the ongoing review of the Advanced Welsh baccalaureate

# ENGLAND

This section outlines changes to:

- > A levels
- > science practicals at A level
- > AS
- > vocational qualifications at Level 3 (Applied General and Tech Level)
- > T Levels
- > GCSEs
- > core maths

## **A levels in England**

Reformed A levels were first taught in England in 2015. Their introduction is being phased, meaning it is likely that students could be studying both reformed and unreformed A levels at the same time, until 2018, when first teaching will begin for the last set of reformed subjects.

The range of subjects reformed for first teaching in 2015 accounts for the majority of examination entries.

Reformed A levels first taught in September 2015:

- > sciences: biology, chemistry, physics
- > English: English language, English literature, English language and literature
- > art and design
- > business
- > computer science
- > economics
- > history
- > sociology
- > psychology

AS qualifications in these subjects were first awarded in 2016, with the first revised A levels being awarded in 2017.

Reformed subjects, first taught from September 2016:

- > dance
- > drama and theatre
- > French
- > geography
- > German
- > classical Greek
- > Latin
- > music
- > physical education
- > religious studies
- > Spanish

Reformed subjects, first taught from September 2017:

- > accounting
- > ancient history
- > Chinese
- > classical civilisation
- > design and technology
- > electronics
- > environmental science
- > film studies
- > further mathematics
- > geology
- > history of art
- > Italian
- > law

- > mathematics
- > media studies
- > music technology
- > philosophy
- > politics
- > Russian
- > statistics

Reformed subjects, first taught from September 2018:

- > Arabic
- > Bengali
- > biblical Hebrew
- > Gujarati
- > modern Greek
- > modern Hebrew
- > Japanese
- > Panjabi
- > Persian
- > Portuguese
- > Polish
- > Turkish
- > Urdu

Subjects not being reformed at AS and A level, and being withdrawn:

- > anthropology
- > applied art and design
- > applied business
- > applied information and communication technology
- > applied science
- > citizenship studies
- > communication and culture



- > creative writing
- > critical thinking
- > economics and business
- > general studies
- > health and social care
- > home economics: food, nutrition, and health
- > human biology
- > humanities
- > information and communication technology
- > leisure studies
- > media: communication and production
- > performance studies
- > performing arts
- > pure mathematics
- > quantitative methods (AS level)
- > science (AS level)
- > science in society
- > travel and tourism
- > use of mathematics (AS level)
- > world development

Reformed A levels in England are two-year, linear qualifications, with exams taking place at the end of the course. The amount of non-exam assessment (or coursework) has been reduced. The new A levels are comparable to the previous A levels in terms of standard, but have been reformed to ensure the content is up-to-date. Ofqual has confirmed the standard of the reformed A level will remain the same as the legacy A level. The grading scale remains A\* – E, and unclassified.

In the linear A levels in England, there are no UMS marks, and all the papers are A level papers. Exam boards will use predictions to identify an overall subject-level grade boundary for A\*, and students who achieve that mark or higher will get an A\*. The Ofqual blog explains the process in more detail: [www.ofqual.blog.gov.uk/2017/03/31/setting-a-in-the-new-a-levels/](http://www.ofqual.blog.gov.uk/2017/03/31/setting-a-in-the-new-a-levels/)

## Science practical

From 2015, revised science A levels in England (biology, chemistry, and physics) included a separate result for the practical element of the qualification. From 2019, geology will also include a practical grade.

These grades are:

- > pass
- > not classified

In historic versions of science A levels, up to 30% of the overall grade was derived from assessment of the candidate's practical skills.

Practical work in the new science A levels is assessed in two ways:

1. 15% of the marks in the written exams will assess students understanding of practical work. Student performance here will contribute to their subject grade.
2. Students will have their practical skills assessed separately. They receive an additional pass or fail result for this, recorded on their qualification certificate.

Each student carries out a minimum of 12 practical activities over their two-year course of study. These activities are referenced in the final written exams, and will contribute to their separate practical result, although evidence of competency in the practical skills is not limited to these activities.

Schools and colleges are able to enter predicted grades for the science practical element in UCAS Apply and applicants can enter their practical grade when listing previously achieved science A levels.

Universities and colleges will have their own policies in relation to the science practical result, which could vary. However, it is likely they will ask for a pass in the science practical, for courses that involve laboratory and practical work from the outset, such as science, technology, engineering, and maths (STEM) courses. This will be made clear in their entry requirements.

## AS in England

New AS qualifications have been decoupled from A levels so they are standalone, and their marks do not count towards the A level. The final A level mark will be based solely on the final assessment (unless there is a contribution from any non-exam assessment, where relevant).

Students may still be able to sit an AS qualification as part of their overall A level programme, if offered by their school or college, but the mark for this will not count towards the overall grade achieved in the final A level. The AS result will be separately awarded and certificated.

Awarding organisations have developed AS qualifications that can be co-taught alongside the corresponding A level.

Ofqual has confirmed the AS will remain at the same standard as the current AS, and the same grade scale will still be used (A – E, and unclassified).

## The AS and HE

Although the AS will no longer count towards the final A level grade, it is still likely to have value for progression to higher education because it:

- > allows for additional breadth of study
- > provides externally validated information as part of the application
- > provides a useful milestone of progress
- > can potentially provide a motivational stepping stone for some students

However, due to the differing patterns of provision, higher education providers have sought to remove any dependency they may have previously had on AS qualifications. This means applicants won't be advantaged or disadvantaged by not taking the AS.

The decoupling of the AS in England has led to a number of schools and colleges asking how it is used in higher education admissions.

Universities and colleges are autonomous in the way they value qualifications, and practices vary. The AS has been previously used:

- > as part of their holistic assessment of an applicant
- > as an external validation of predicted grades
- > only if an applicant has not met the terms of their offer
- > if they require a fourth AS, to meet their standard entry requirements

Many higher education providers have published qualification reform statements detailing how their admissions practices may have changed as a result of qualification reform. You can view these at [www.ukcas.com/applying-he-reformed-qualifications](http://www.ukcas.com/applying-he-reformed-qualifications).

UCAS requires all achieved qualifications to be listed in the application, including the decoupled AS. This is part of the applicant declaration.

## Vocational qualifications at Level 3 (Applied General and Tech Levels)

Some vocational qualifications offered at Level 3 have been reformed due to changes to school and college performance tables. Vocational qualifications must meet the criteria set by the Department for Education (DfE) to count towards school and college performance tables. These reforms mean the majority of Level 3 qualifications that previously counted towards school performance tables were removed from them in 2016. As a result, the reformed versions of these qualifications are fundamentally different to their predecessors.

Vocational qualifications that meet the requirements for inclusion in school and college performance tables are now classified as follows:

- > **Applied General qualifications** – their purpose is to provide a broader vocational learning in an applied context. They 'are designed for students wanting to continue their education through applied learning'. These qualifications must meet a number of criteria relating to their content and assessment, as well as endorsement by at least three universities and colleges.

- > **Tech Level qualifications** – their purpose is to lead to a ‘recognised occupation’. Examples provided by the DfE include engineering, accounting, construction, manufacturing, agriculture, and IT. These qualifications must meet a number of quality criteria, relating to their content and assessment, as well as the endorsement of five employers registered with Companies House.

Further information about these qualifications can be found at [www.gov.uk/government/publications/vocational-qualifications-for-14-to-19-year-olds](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/vocational-qualifications-for-14-to-19-year-olds).

The reform of vocational qualifications was implemented in two stages: an interim stage and a full stage. Each of these stages introduced new criteria for vocational qualifications to meet, to count towards school and college performance tables.

The first teaching of the qualifications reformed on an interim basis was from 2014, and these counted towards school performance measures in 2016. Only qualifications that meet the full criteria will count towards performance measures from 2018.

As well as including content that meets the definition of a Tech Level or Applied General qualification, fully reformed vocational qualifications must demonstrate a number of characteristics, including:

- > **purpose statement** – for an Applied General qualification, this must explicitly state that the qualification supports progression to a range of subjects at a higher level of learning
- > **size** – Applied General qualifications must include at least 150 guided learning hours (GLH). Tech Level qualifications must include at least 300 GLH
- > **appropriate content** – qualifications must include mandatory content that is directly related to the qualification’s purpose, and makes an associated contribution to the overall grade:
  - > 40% of a Tech Level
  - > 60% of an Applied General
- > **appropriate assessment** – Tech Levels must have 30% external assessment. Applied Generals must have at least 40% external assessment. Students will also be given one opportunity to resit
- > **synoptic assessment**
- > **grading** – all vocational qualifications must be graded using three grading points or more, such as distinction/merit/pass

Within the first two years of a qualification being awarded, it must also demonstrate:

- > **progression** – an Applied General must show that it allows students to go on to study at a higher level. Similarly, it must be shown that students with Tech Levels go on to employment
- > **track record** – to be recognised in performance tables, vocational qualifications need to be achieved by at least 100 students aged 16 to 19, in at least three centres, in one of the first two years following approval

These requirements have been phased in as follows:

	Interim requirement (for qualifications counting in 2016 performance tables)	Full requirement (for qualifications counting in 2018 performance tables)
A. Declared purpose	X	X
B. Size	X	X
C. Recognition	X	X
D. Synoptic assessment		X
E. External assessment		X
F. Grading		X
G. Employer involvement <b>(Tech Level qualifications only)</b>		X
H. Progression		X
I. Proven track record		X

Awarding organisations have taken different approaches to the development of these qualifications. Some have sought to develop qualifications to meet the interim standard initially, whereas others have focused on the full requirements (usually because they had initially met the requirements of the interim arrangements).

#### **Impact on attainment**

Due to a number of factors, including the introduction of external and synoptic assessment, it is likely fewer students will pass the overall qualification, or achieve top grades.

In March 2018, Ofqual wrote to all Applied General and Tech level awarding organisations recommending that, where appropriate, they consider changing their approach to grading, to provide a 'safety net' for those who narrowly miss a pass on one or more externally-assessed units. Changes vary between awarding organisations, depending on whether they would improve the qualification's overall validity. The 'safety net' changes, and an additional retake opportunity, will continue for as long as the pre-existing (legacy) qualifications are being offered alongside new qualifications,

#### **Dual running**

Unlike A level reform, there is currently no cut-off point for the withdrawal of unreformed vocational qualifications. Because of this, centres will continue to offer both versions, so applicants will apply to higher education holding either reformed, unreformed, or a combination of vocational qualifications. However, only the reformed versions will contribute to performance measures.

With the dual running of these qualifications by some awarding organisations, it is important that applicants enter the correct qualification into Apply – there may be subtle differences in the qualification title. The qualification accreditation number (QAN) will allow for specific identification of which qualification is being undertaken.

There is a risk that applicants and advisers may face challenges when identifying the correct title of qualifications. The table below shows the title of reformed and unreformed BTEC qualifications (which are the most common vocational qualification undertaken by applicants):

Guided learning hours	Current title	New title
180	BTEC Level 3 Certificate (graded P, M, D, D*)	BTEC Level 3 National Certificate (graded P, M, D, D*)
360	BTEC Level 3 Subsidiary Diploma (graded P, M, D, D*)	BTEC Level 3 National Extended Certificate (graded P, M, D, D*)
510/540	BTEC Level 3 90-Credit Diploma (graded PP to D*D*)	BTEC Level 3 National Foundation Diploma (graded P, M, D, D*)
720	BTEC Level 3 Diploma (graded PP to D*D*)	BTEC Level 3 National Diploma (graded PP to D*D*)
1080	BTEC Level 3 Extended Diploma (graded PPP to D*D*D*)	BTEC Level 3 National Extended Diploma (graded PPP to D*D*D*)

Please check the website of individual awarding organisations for regulated titles and specifications.

### Considerations for higher education providers

There are a number of key considerations for higher education providers when reviewing Applied General or Tech level qualifications, that meet the full DfE criteria from 2018:

- > These qualifications are fundamentally different to their predecessors, and likely to result in students developing different skills and aptitudes. Providers should ensure their understanding of these qualifications remains up-to-date.
- > The reformed qualifications include both external and synoptic assessment, as well as changes to resit rules. These changes are likely to result in fewer students passing the qualification. Equally, it is likely that grade distributions will change. In light of this, providers may wish to review their entry requirements, offer-making, and decision-making strategies in relation to these qualifications.
- > The reformed and unreformed qualifications will be delivered by schools and colleges at the same time. Therefore, providers may wish to consider their approach to setting and listing entry requirements for the specific qualifications.
- > The dual running of the qualifications may result in applicants entering the incorrect version on their application. We will be working to support applicants and advisers in this area.
- > A larger mandatory core means providers that require certain levels of achievement in particular units, or ask for specific units to satisfy subject knowledge requirements, should familiarise themselves with the new content specifications, to ensure these requirements are still valid. Not all students will be able to choose their optional units, as these may be prescribed by the school or college. Therefore, providers should be cautious if requiring achievement in optional modules as part of their entry requirements, offer-making, and decision-making strategies.

### Regulation of vocational qualifications

Ofqual is responsible for the regulation of Applied General and Tech Level qualifications delivered in England.

The regulatory approach undertaken for Applied General and Tech Level qualifications differs to A levels. This is because there are no specific qualification-level criteria for Applied Generals, as there currently are for GCSEs, AS, and A levels. Applied General qualifications and Tech Levels are categories introduced by the DfE for accountability purposes, rather than a specific type of regulated qualification.

Applied Generals must comply with Ofqual's general rules, as is the case with all regulated qualifications.

## T Levels

From 2020 first teaching, T Levels will be introduced across England. Delivered over two years, T Levels are designed to offer a high-quality technical education provision after GCSE/Level 2, and alongside A levels and apprenticeships.

T Levels will be based on occupational standards, development by employers, and approved by the Institute for Apprenticeships and Technical Education. T Levels and apprenticeships will be the two options within the technical education system, both leading to skilled employment in the same occupational areas.

A programme of study rather than a qualification, a T Level will consist of:

- > A Technical Qualification (TQ), of between 900 – 1400 GLH and made up of:
  - > The Core (graded A\* – E), accounting for 20 – 50% of the TQ and designed to provide students with the knowledge and understanding of the concepts, theories, and principles relevant to the T Level. The Core will be assessed through external examinations and a substantial, employer-set project.
  - > The occupational specialism (graded D, M, P), designed to develop the knowledge and skills required to achieve the relevant competence in an occupational specialism needed to enter skilled employment. The OS will be assessed synoptically, through rigorous practical assessments.
- > An industry placement, of 315 – 420 hours over a minimum of 45 days, to allow students to develop and apply their knowledge, skills, and behaviours in the work place.
- > Maths and English requirements at Level 2 (where these have not already been met) or above if a T Level panel requires a higher level.
- > Any other requirements set by the T Level panel, such as a licence to practice qualifications or professional registration.

There will be fifteen technical routes, each with pathways underneath. The first three T Levels for delivery in 2020 are:

- > digital (digital production, design and development pathway)
- > construction (design, surveying and planning pathway)
- > education (education and childcare pathway)

Subjects approved for delivery in 2021 are:

- > construction (onsite construction and building services engineering pathways)
- > digital (digital support services and digital business services pathways)
- > health and science (health, healthcare science and science pathways)

Further subjects will be rolled out from 2022 onwards.

One awarding organisation will be chosen to deliver each T Level subject. In February 2019, it was confirmed that Pearson will deliver the design, surveying and planning, and digital production, design and development T Levels, while NCFE CACHE has been awarded the education T Level.



### **T Levels and progression to higher education**

As well as skilled employment, it is anticipated that T Levels will facilitate progression to higher level study. The Department for Education (DfE) are keen to engage with HE providers to understand how they might use T Levels for admission purposes.

UCAS is working with the Department for Education to allocate Tariff points in line with three A levels to T Levels. This is to reflect the size and complexity of the programme. UCAS and the DfE are also working to raise awareness of T Levels and subsequent pathways to higher education, including Level 4 or 5 classroom-based technical education and degrees. This includes exploring how UCAS' qualifications information services can support students to understand their options, should they decide to undertake a T Level.

### **GCSEs in England**

GCSEs in England changed fundamentally from 2015, with new specifications being taught in English language, English literature, and mathematics from September.

From September 2016, revised GCSEs were first taught in:

- > ancient languages
- > art and design
- > biology
- > chemistry
- > citizenship
- > combined science
- > computer science
- > dance
- > drama
- > food preparation and nutrition
- > geography
- > history
- > modern foreign languages (French, German, Spanish)
- > music
- > physical education
- > physics
- > religious studies

From September 2017, reformed subjects were first taught in:

- > Arabic
- > ancient history
- > astronomy
- > Bengali
- > business
- > Chinese
- > classical civilisation
- > design and technology
- > economics
- > electronics
- > engineering
- > film studies
- > geology
- > Italian
- > Japanese
- > media studies
- > modern Greek
- > modern Hebrew
- > Panjabi
- > PE (short course)
- > Polish
- > psychology
- > Russian
- > sociology
- > statistics
- > Urdu

From September 2018, reformed subjects were first taught in:

- > biblical Hebrew
- > Gujarati
- > Persian
- > Portuguese
- > Turkish

The following subjects are not being reformed, and are being withdrawn:

- > additional and further additional science
- > additional applied science
- > applications of mathematics
- > applied business
- > applied information and communications technology
- > applied science
- > business and communication systems
- > business communications
- > business studies and economics
- > catering
- > design and technology: food technology
- > digital communication
- > environmental science
- > environmental and land-based science
- > expressive arts
- > general studies
- > health and social care
- > home economics: child development
- > home economics: food and nutrition
- > home economics: textiles
- > hospitality
- > human health and physiology

- > humanities
- > information and communication technology
- > law
- > leisure and tourism
- > manufacturing
- > performing arts

#### Key features of the new GCSEs

- > New GCSEs are graded 9 to 1, with 9 being the highest grade. A U grade is awarded for those who fail to meet the requirements to be awarded a grade 1.
- > The qualification is linear and predominantly exam-based. However, other forms of assessment are used for essential subject-specific assessment that can't be assessed by written exam, such as speaking skills in English language.
- > Tiering (the practice of having different examinations or assessments for different ability groups) will only be used when one set of assessments cannot assess students across the full ability range in a valid and manageable way, or there are content requirements specific to the higher tier only.

The new GCSEs are being phased in, and by 2020, all GCSEs will be graded 9 to 1. During this transition, students will receive a mixture of letter and number grades in England. No direct comparison can be made between the current alphabetical grading scale and the new numerical one. However, it is expected that the same proportion of candidates will achieve a 4 and above, as achieve a C and above in the unreformed system.

#### English language

In the reformed English language specification, spoken language skills are assessed and reported separately. Students also receive a separate result for this, and marks in this area can no longer contribute to the overall GCSE score. Further information about the changes to GCSEs in England can be found at [www.newgcse.campaign.gov.uk/](http://www.newgcse.campaign.gov.uk/)

Students who achieve a grade 4 or above in either English language or English literature, will not be required to continue studying towards their GCSE English as part of their 16 to 19 study programme, as they will have met the condition of funding. Many HE providers require a grade 4 or 5 in GCSE English as part of their entry requirements, however it should be noted that some will require English language specifically, and not all will accept English literature in lieu of this. Our **2018/19 GCSE survey** offers insight in to how HE providers are positioning their GCSE requirements on the numeric scale, their position on the suitability of English language and English literature for progression, and how they are responding to the introduction of GCSE mathematics and mathematics: numeracy in Wales.

It is for schools and colleges to decide if they require students, who meet the condition of funding through prior attainment of a grade 4 or above in English literature, to resit English language if they achieve below a grade 4 in this subject. They should advise HE providers in the reference, and HE providers that do not accept English literature to meet their GCSE requirements, should be mindful of this when assessing applications and publishing entry criteria.

### Core Maths

Core Maths is the collective name for a number of Level 3 qualifications, and not a qualification title in itself. Core Maths qualifications are aimed at students aged 16 and over, who have achieved a grade C or above at GCSE maths, but chose to not pursue the qualification to A level. They have a more practical focus than the A level, focusing on the development and use of 'real-life' maths skills in contextualised scenarios.

The qualifications were designed to support the government's ambition for the majority of students to continue studying maths post-16.

The following qualifications fall within the Core Maths bracket:

- > AQA Level 3 Certificate Mathematical Studies
- > City & Guilds Level 3 Certificate in Using and Applying Mathematics
- > NCFE Level 3 Certificate in Mathematics for Everyday Life (2019 first teaching)
- > OCR Level 3 Certificate in Quantitative Problem Solving
- > OCR Level 3 Certificate in Quantitative Reasoning
- > Pearson Edexcel Level 3 Certificate in Mathematics in Context
- > WJEC Eduqas Level 3 Certificate in Mathematics for Work and Life

While the content of each qualification is different, their structures are broadly similar. All are:

- > 180 GLH in size
- > graded A – E

The UCAS Qualification Information Profile (QIP) for these qualifications can be found at [qips.ucas.com/qip/core-maths-qualifications-count-towards-dfe-16-19-performance-tables-category](https://qips.ucas.com/qip/core-maths-qualifications-count-towards-dfe-16-19-performance-tables-category).

These qualifications all appear in Apply with '(Core Maths)' at the end of their titles, to help applicants find them.

### Core Maths in schools and colleges

Approximately 180 'early adopter' schools and colleges offered Core Maths for first teaching in September 2014. The qualifications have been available to be taught in schools and colleges since September 2015.

There was a performance measure in 2017 performance tables, to show the numbers of students achieving an approved Level 3 maths qualification, including Core Maths. This is an additional measure, rather than a headline performance measure. Core Maths is also part of the TechBacc performance measure; this comprises a Tech Level, the Extended Project Qualification (EPQ), and one of the following Level 3 mathematics qualifications – A level, AS level, IB Certificates in mathematical studies or mathematics, or Core Maths.

### Core Maths and HE

Core Maths qualifications are distinct from AS and A level maths. AS/A levels extend students' experience of mathematical techniques, developing advanced analysis of mathematical problems. They are suited to students wanting to progress to a higher level of study with a particular mathematical focus. Core Maths will prepare students for further study and careers without such a mathematical focus, but where mathematical knowledge and its applications are nonetheless important, such as geography or psychology.

While the qualification has been designed to encourage students to study mathematics post-16, it is unlikely to offer the same progression opportunities as an AS or A level in mathematics. If higher education providers require specific mathematical skills to progress on to a course, they should make it clear in their entry requirements if a Core Maths qualification would satisfy this requirement.

Equally, any student or adviser uncertain whether Core Maths would satisfy a provider's entry requirements, should contact them for further information. Core Maths qualifications should be declared on the UCAS application, and may be used to demonstrate breadth of study and skills development.

### Core Maths and the UCAS Tariff

Core Maths carries the same number of Tariff points as an AS qualification, as the UK regulators state it is of the same size and standard as the AS.

	Grade	GLH	Size band	Grade band	Tariff points
All core maths qualifications	A	180	2	10	20
All core maths qualifications	B	180	2	8	16
All core maths qualifications	C	180	2	6	12
All core maths qualifications	D	180	2	5	10
All core maths qualifications	E	180	2	3	6

# NORTHERN IRELAND

This section covers:

- > A levels in Northern Ireland
- > GCSEs in Northern Ireland

The Minister of Education asked CCEA Regulation, as the regulator of qualifications in Northern Ireland, to undertake a fundamental review of GCSEs and A levels. The subsequent report was submitted in 2013, and the Minister accepted its recommendations in March 2014. He announced that Northern Ireland would continue to have an open market for GCSE and A level qualifications, which means that schools are free to choose AS and A level qualifications offered by any of the following awarding organisations (with the exception of A level science – see A levels in Northern Ireland below):

- > AQA
- > CCEA
- > OCR
- > Pearson
- > WJEC

Therefore, some students will take decoupled A levels, offered by AQA, OCR, Pearson, and WJEC (Eduqas), where the AS marks do not contribute to the overall A level grade, while others will take A levels offered by CCEA and WJEC, where the AS marks contribute 40% to the overall A level grade.

CCEA Regulation works closely with the Department of Education (NI), awarding organisations, and other regulators, to maintain the rigour and comparability of all qualifications offered in Northern Ireland.

## **A levels in Northern Ireland**

### **A levels delivered by CCEA Awarding Organisation**

Revised A levels delivered by CCEA Awarding Organisation (AO) were first taught from September 2016, with the changes largely focused on the qualification content.

The subjects revised by CCEA AO for first teaching in 2016 were:

- > art and design
- > biology
- > business studies

- > chemistry
- > economics
- > English literature
- > digital technology
- > environmental technology
- > food and nutrition
- > geography
- > government and politics
- > health and social care
- > history
- > history of art
- > Journalism
- > life and health sciences
- > modern languages
- > moving image arts
- > music
- > performing arts
- > physics
- > religious studies
- > software systems development
- > sports science and the active leisure industry
- > technology and design

Professional business services was introduced for first teaching in 2017, and maths and further maths were introduced for first teaching in 2018.

A levels delivered by CCEA AO include the AS as part of the A level – with AS results contributing to the overall A level grade. Equally, marks for science practical skills continue to form part of the overall grade for science A levels.

In Northern Ireland, the weighting of the AS has changed, with revised AS qualifications making a 40% contribution to the overall A level grade.

Schools will be able to decide whether they offer these qualifications in a modular or linear fashion.



### A levels delivered by other awarding organisations

Since 2015, students in Northern Ireland have also been able to take A levels offered by AQA, OCR, Pearson, and WJEC. These follow the same structure as those in England and Wales, although all science A levels taken in Northern Ireland must have marks for the practical assessment contributing to the overall grade.

Students in Northern Ireland taking science A levels must follow a course where the marks for the assessment of practical skills contribute to the overall grade. This means students must take either CCEA or WJEC science A levels.

### GCSEs in Northern Ireland

As with A levels, for GCSEs there is also an open qualifications market in Northern Ireland, which means that schools are free to choose GCSE qualifications offered by any of the following awarding organisations (with the exception of GCSE English Language):

- > AQA
- > CCEA
- > OCR
- > Pearson
- > WJEC (Eduqas)

As GCSE grading is changing, this means some students will take GCSEs, offered by AQA, OCR, Pearson, and WJEC (Eduqas), which are graded 9 – 1, while others will take GCSEs offered by CCEA, which will be graded using a new alphabetical grading scale from summer 2019. The only GCSE English Language qualification available to students in Northern Ireland is the CCEA specification, due to the ministerial directive that marks for speaking and listening must contribute to the overall grade.

The new alphabetical scale introduces a C\* grade aligned to the 5, and a new A\* grade aligned to the numeric grade 9.

Therefore, in summer 2019, when the new letter grades are awarded, the A\* will be adjusted to reflect the numeric grade 9. This will mean that proportionally fewer students will achieve an A\* from 2019. The grade 9 will be awarded to approximately 20% of the students who achieve a grade 7 or above.

There will be no direct equivalent in the new letter scale with the grade 8. A grade 8 falls between a grade A and A\*. Therefore, universities that set entry requirements at grades 8 and 9 under the numeric system, would require grades A\* and A for students taking CCEA GCSEs, to attract students of similar ability.

The introduction of the grade C\* will reduce the number of students achieving the new grade B. The grade B will align with the grade 6 in the numeric scale.

The new letter and numeric scales will introduce more grades at the higher end of the grading scale. This allows for greater differentiation among higher achieving students.

The new CCEA grading scale is shown below:

New A*-G Structure (summer 2019)	9-1 Structure (awarding phased in from 2017)	Old A*-G Structure (phased out from 2019)
A*	9	A*
A	8	
		7
B	6	B
C*	5	C
C	4	
D	3	D
E		
F	2	F
G	1	G

Non-exam assessment in the revised suite of CCEA GCSEs has only been included when it is the most valid way of assessing essential elements of the subject.

The following GCSEs have been withdrawn by CCEA AO:

- > applied business
- > applied ICT

They were awarded for the final time in summer 2018.

The full suite of GCSEs offered by CCEA from 2017 is as follows:

- > agriculture and land use
- > art and design
- > biology
- > business and communication systems
- > business studies

- > chemistry
- > child development
- > construction
- > contemporary crafts
- > digital technology
- > double award science
- > drama
- > economics
- > engineering and manufacturing
- > English language
- > English literature
- > home economics: food and nutrition
- > French
- > further mathematics
- > Gaelic
- > geography
- > German
- > government and politics
- > health and social care
- > history
- > hospitality
- > Irish
- > journalism
- > learning for life and work
- > leisure and tourism
- > mathematics
- > motor vehicle and road user studies

- > moving image arts
- > music
- > physical education
- > physics
- > religious studies
- > single award science
- > Spanish
- > statistics
- > technology and design

This section provides information about:

- > Curriculum for Excellence
- > changes to National 4 and 5 qualifications
- > Highers and Advanced Highers

National 4 and 5 qualifications, and courses with an SCQF Level 4/5 entry requirement (or GCSE equivalent)

### **Curriculum for Excellence**

In recent years, the education system in Scotland has undergone major reform as part of Curriculum for Excellence. This has transformed teaching practice and the curriculum offered to young people aged three to 18.

All qualifications revised as part of Curriculum for Excellence aim to develop the following four capacities, enabling young people to become:

- > successful students
- > confident individuals
- > responsible citizens
- > effective contributors

Further information about the four capacities can be found at [https://education.gov.scot/scottish-education-system/policy-for-scottish-education/policy-drivers/cfe-\(building-from-the-statement-appendix-incl-btc1-5\)/What%20is%20Curriculum%20for%20Excellence](https://education.gov.scot/scottish-education-system/policy-for-scottish-education/policy-drivers/cfe-(building-from-the-statement-appendix-incl-btc1-5)/What%20is%20Curriculum%20for%20Excellence)

Curriculum for Excellence introduced a range of new qualifications in Scotland. For example, Standard Grades were replaced, and Intermediate 1 and 2 qualifications were phased out in 2014/15. These qualifications were replaced by National 4 and 5 qualifications, which were first introduced in 2013/14. The first students holding National 4 and 5 qualifications entered higher education in 2015.

One of the main objectives of Curriculum for Excellence was to introduce curriculums tailored for the individual student. This means there is an increased flexibility in the delivery of qualifications, and greater diversity in the way qualifications are taken. For example, while a student is undertaking the National 4 or 5 syllabus in S4, they may not undertake the actual qualifications and summative assessment – allowing them to move directly to their Highers at some stage in S4 using the National 4 or 5 syllabus as foundation knowledge for Highers. Equally, some applicants may take a mix of National 4 and 5s, Highers, and Advanced Highers in a single year.

Scottish universities and other higher education providers (HEPs) have published policies regarding Curriculum for Excellence and university admissions.. SQA has engaged with universities and colleges in other parts of the UK to similarly encourage the publication of such statements. These can be found on our website at [www.ucas.com/advisers/guides-and-resources/qualification-reform](http://www.ucas.com/advisers/guides-and-resources/qualification-reform).

### **Changes to National 4 and 5 qualifications**

National 4 qualifications are different to the courses previously offered at SCQF Level 4. Previously, students would start their Standard Grades in S3 (third year of secondary school) and study them over two years. Students generally begin Nationals at the start of S4 (fourth year of secondary school), following a broader general education at S1, S2, and S3. National 4 students are assessed internally throughout the year, using SQA assessments. While there are no externally assessed exams, the assessments in schools and colleges are externally quality assured by SQA.

National 5 qualifications contain external assessment, and are of the same standard as qualifications previously offered at SCQF Level 5, such as Standard Grade Credit and Intermediate 2. Until 2017, National 5s included internally assessed unit assessment, which did not contribute to the grade. However, since August 2017, National 5s have had the unit assessment removed, with external assessment being adjusted to ensure curriculum coverage continued to be appropriately assessed.

### **Highers and Advanced Highers**

From August 2014, Highers which reflect the aims and principles of Curriculum for Excellence replaced the existing Highers in Scotland. These are the same standard as previous Highers. Applicants began to apply to higher education holding these qualifications during the 2015 admissions cycle. The revised and existing Highers were dual run for the 2014/15 academic year.

From August 2018, the internally assessed unit assessment in Highers was removed, with external assessment being adjusted to ensure curriculum coverage continues to be appropriately assessed. As with the National 5 qualifications, unit assessment did not contribute to grades.

Due to the phased introduction of the revised new Highers and the additional changes, some Scottish applicants applying for entry holding Highers may have studied the unrevised version, the revised version with units, the further revised version without units or a combination. For Highers which had internally assessed unit assessment this did not contribute to the grade.

The new Advanced Highers were first taught in August 2015, meaning Scottish applicants applying to higher education from 2016 entry onwards may hold these qualifications. However, not all Scottish applicants to HE will have Advanced Highers, and in most cases where they do take them, it is likely to be only one. Advanced Highers – both the unrevised and revised versions – include internally assessed unit assessment which does not contribute to the grade. From August 2019, the unit assessment will be removed, with external assessment being adjusted to ensure curriculum coverage continues to be appropriately assessed.

SQA has confirmed that both the different versions of the Highers and Advanced Highers respectively are of an identical standard.

**National 4 and 5 qualifications, and courses with an SCQF Level 4/5 entry requirement (or GCSE equivalent entry requirements)**

Curriculum for Excellence introduces new flexibility to the way qualifications are taken by Scottish students, as they can bypass National 4 and 5 in favour of studying Highers.

Some courses, such as medicine and dentistry, often stipulate an applicant must have a GCSE equivalent entry requirement, such as a National 5 in English. If an applicant has bypassed their National 4 and 5 qualifications, the university or college will normally require them to have achieved qualifications at Higher or Advanced Higher.

For example:

Medicine (A100)  
Higher: AAABB  
National 5: A in mathematics and English  
If you have not studied National 5 qualifications, we would expect you to have studied and achieved English and mathematics at Higher level.

All Scottish and some English universities and colleges, have published a Curriculum for Excellence statement (available to view on their websites) that describes how they will accommodate the differing patterns of provision.

Universities and colleges will implement selection criteria and processes to ensure applicants are not disadvantaged due to the pattern of provision undertaken.

We advise any applicants with a query about entry requirements for a specific course to contact the university or college concerned for clarification.

This section outlines changes to:

- > Advanced Welsh Baccalaureate
- > AS and A levels in Wales
- > GCSEs in Wales

### The Advanced Welsh Baccalaureate

The Advanced Welsh Baccalaureate is a fully reformed version of the legacy Welsh Baccalaureate, that was developed for first teaching in 2015 (first awarded 2017).

The Advanced Welsh Baccalaureate includes:

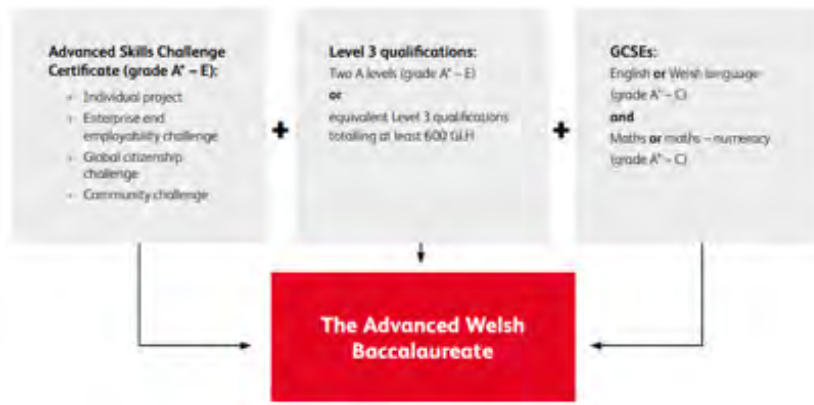
- > a Skills Challenge Certificate qualification, which is the same size as an A level and is graded A\* – E
- > a minimum of two Level 3 qualifications (e.g. A levels)
- > GCSE maths or maths numeracy, and English language or Welsh language

The Skills Challenge Certificate comprises four components, and enables students to develop the skills needed for education, employment, and life:

Skills Challenge Certificate	Purpose	Skills development and assessed
1. Individual project (50%)	To develop research skills.	Literacy
2. Enterprise and Employability Challenge (20%)	To develop enterprising skills and attributes to enhance employability.	Numeracy Digital literacy Critical thinking and problem-solving
3. Global Citizenship Challenge (15%)	To develop knowledge and understanding of world issues.	Planning and organisation Creativity and innovation
4. Community Challenge (15%)	To identify and participate in community-based opportunities.	Personal effectiveness



To be awarded the Advanced Welsh Baccalaureate, students must achieve the Skills Challenge Certificate and supporting qualifications.



The Skills Challenge Certificate can be awarded as a qualification even if a student does not achieve the necessary supporting qualifications to be awarded the Welsh Baccalaureate.

Further details can be found at [qualificationswales.org/?lang=en](http://qualificationswales.org/?lang=en).

### Welsh Baccalaureate variations

Since 2014, there have been three variations of the Welsh Baccalaureate Advanced Level:

- > **Pass/fail model** – summer 2014 was the final major awarding of the Welsh Baccalaureate with a pass/fail grading system. However, applicants may still apply to higher education holding this qualification.
- > **Graded model (A\* – C)** – one of the initial recommendations of the independent Review of Qualifications for 14 to 19 year olds in Wales, was that the current Welsh Baccalaureate should be graded. The first award of the graded Welsh Baccalaureate Advanced Level was in 2015 (2013 first teaching). It is graded A\* – C.
- > **Current model (A\* – E)** – the final report of the Review of Qualifications for 14 to 19 year olds in Wales recommended that a fully reformed, more rigorous Welsh Baccalaureate should be developed for first teaching in 2015 (first award 2017). This is graded A\* – E at Advanced level, and is the current version of this qualification.

Having more than one Welsh Baccalaureate in Apply has the potential to cause confusion for both applicants and admissions teams. We have tried to reduce confusion for applicants by making it easy for them to identify which version of the qualification they have taken. The versions of the Welsh Baccalaureate currently in Apply are:

- > Welsh Baccalaureate Advanced Diploma (pre-2014)
- > Welsh Baccalaureate Advanced Diploma (graded A\* – C)
- > Welsh Baccalaureate Advanced Skills Challenge Certificate

**AS and A levels in Wales**

Revised AS and A levels were first taught from September 2015 in:

- > art and design
- > biology
- > business
- > chemistry
- > computer science
- > economics
- > English language
- > English language and literature
- > English literature
- > history
- > physics
- > psychology
- > sociology
- > Welsh (first language)

Revised AS and A levels were first taught from September 2016 in:

- > drama
- > French
- > geography
- > German
- > music
- > physical education
- > religious studies
- > Spanish
- > Welsh second language

The following reformed subjects were first taught from September 2017:

- > design and technology
- > government and politics
- > media studies
- > mathematics
- > further mathematics
- > law

The changes to these qualifications are largely around content, with these subjects sharing similar content with their English equivalent, where possible. However, content may differ when there is a need to reflect a Welsh perspective.

The following reformed subjects will be first taught from 2020:

- > Health and Social Care, and Childcare

A levels offered in Wales continue to have an embedded AS qualification. However, the weighting of the AS in reformed A levels has been reduced to 40%, meaning a student's achievement in the second year of A level study will make up a greater proportion of their overall grade.

Practical or controlled assessment will be retained in subjects where it plays an important role in assessing the subject, and will continue to contribute towards the final grade.

The Welsh Government is withdrawing the following AS and A level qualifications in Wales. The final awards were in summer 2017, on a limited basis:

- > applied art and design
- > applied business
- > human biology
- > economics and business (combined course)

**Note:** In subjects where there is no Wales-specific A level available, state-funded students can choose from the A levels that have been reformed for England, as long as Qualifications Wales has designated them as eligible for use on publicly funded learning programmes in Wales. The new AS and A levels reformed for England are decoupled, so the AS results for designated qualifications do not contribute to the overall grade awarded at A level. For more information about designated A levels, see the Qualifications Wales website – [qualificationswales.org/?lang=en](http://qualificationswales.org/?lang=en).

## Vocational qualification reform in Wales

### Qualifications in Health and Social Care, and Childcare

Qualifications Wales has commissioned the development of a new suite of qualifications in Health and Social Care, and Childcare for teaching in Wales. These qualifications will be developed and delivered by City & Guilds and WJEC, and will be introduced between September 2019 and September 2020.

The aim of the new suite of qualifications in Health and Social Care, and Childcare is to provide a single, consistent framework of qualifications for the sector that provides clear progression routes for learners whilst meeting the needs of the sector.

The new suite will include qualifications from level 1/2 to level 5. Some of the qualifications are competence-based and enable learners to work in certain roles, whilst others enable learners to gain knowledge and progress to further study or employment. The suite also includes a GCSE, AS and A level in Health and Social Care, and Childcare. A diagram showing the new qualification framework can be found on the dedicated website [www.healthandcarelearning.wales](http://www.healthandcarelearning.wales).

### Progression to higher education

The new suite of qualifications includes three level 3 qualifications for teaching on programmes of learning in schools or further education. These qualifications will be first taught in September 2020:

- > A level and AS in Health and Social Care, and Childcare (180/360 GLH)
- > Level 3 Children's Care, Play, Learning and Development: Practice and Theory (720 GLH)
- > Level 3 Certificate and Diploma in Health and Social Care: Principles and Contexts (360/720 GLH)

These qualifications are structured so that a learner may take either of the larger qualifications in Children's Care, Play, Learning and Development or Health and Social Care: Principles and Contexts alongside the A level to create a full-time programme of learning equivalent in size to three A levels. Learners may also combine one or more of these qualifications with others at level 3.

Other qualifications at level 3 are designed to confirm competence and enable learners to register to work in certain roles. These qualifications will be first taught from September 2019.

### Qualifications in Construction and Built Environment

During 2019, Qualifications Wales will also be commissioning an awarding body to develop qualifications in Construction and Built Environment for teaching in Wales. These will be practice-based qualifications at levels 2 and 3 covering trades in Construction and Building Services Engineering.

Qualifications Wales is also working with the sector to develop a GCSE in Construction and Built Environment, to be taught for the first time in September 2021, and an A level in Construction and Built Environment, to be taught for the first time in September 2022.

### GCSEs in Wales

GCSEs in Wales continue to be the main Level 1 and Level 2 qualification undertaken by young people, and keep the current A\* – G grading.

New GCSEs in Wales were first taught from September 2015 in:

- > English language
- > Welsh language
- > mathematics – numeracy
- > mathematics

Revised specifications are being taught in the following subjects:

- > English literature
- > Welsh literature

The new GCSEs in English language and Welsh language will provide a greater focus on literacy and the functional aspects of language. In both GCSEs, oracy, reading, and writing skills will contribute to the overall grade. The achievement in these individual aspects will be reported on certificates.

It is expected that most young people in Wales will study both GCSE mathematics qualifications.

New GCSEs in Wales were first taught from September 2016 in:

- > art and design
- > biology
- > chemistry
- > drama
- > French
- > geography
- > German
- > history
- > music
- > physical education
- > physics
- > religious studies
- > Spanish

The following reformed subjects were first taught from September 2017:

- > business
- > computer science
- > design and technology
- > history
- > media studies
- > physical education (short course)
- > religious studies
- > Welsh second language

Note: In subjects where there is no Wales-specific GCSE available, state-funded students can choose from the GCSEs that have been reformed for England, as long as Qualifications Wales has designated them as eligible for use on publicly funded learning programmes in Wales. These GCSEs have been accredited by Ofqual, and therefore follow the 9 – 1 grading scale. For more information about designated A levels, see the Qualifications Wales website – [qualificationswales.org/?lang=en](http://qualificationswales.org/?lang=en).

The Welsh Government is withdrawing GCSE Digital Communication in Wales. It was awarded for the final time in summer 2017.

# ACCESS TO HIGHER EDUCATION DIPLOMA

The Access to HE (HvE) Diploma, available in England and Wales, underwent significant reform for first teaching September 2014. This increased the consistency of structure and volume of academic content in Access to HE diplomas.

- > All Access to HE diplomas comprise a number of units of three, six, or nine credits, graded pass, merit, or distinction, which in all cases provide a common total of 60 credits.
- > 45 credits must come from graded Level 3 units concerned with academic subject content.
- > 15 credits come from ungraded Level 3 or Level 2 units.

## **The Access to HE Diploma and the UCAS Tariff**

UCAS worked with the Quality Assurance Agency (QAA) to allocate Tariff points to the Access to HE Diploma. This was made possible in part due to the increased consistency introduced by the reforms, so Tariff points only apply to the 2013 specification Access to HE Diploma (first taught September 2014).

The points received depend on the grade credit profile achieved. There are 136 different combinations in total, but the Tariff calculator and explanatory video can help in arriving at a total points score.

It is worth noting that many universities and colleges will continue to refer to the Access to HE Diploma in their entry requirements in terms of credits and grades.

# OTHER RESOURCES

In addition to this document, we have produced a range of resources to support all audiences in understanding the changes to qualifications. These resources can be found on the following pages of the UCAS website:

- > Qualification reform: [www.ucas.com/advisers/guides-and-resources/qualification-reform](http://www.ucas.com/advisers/guides-and-resources/qualification-reform)
- > Applying to HE with reformed qualifications: [www.ucas.com/applying-he-reformed-qualifications](http://www.ucas.com/applying-he-reformed-qualifications)

## Qualification reform timeline

The UCAS qualification reform timeline gives details of subjects and qualifications which will be offered in England, Wales, Scotland, and Northern Ireland, both for first teaching and for entering higher education. This interactive tool can be found at [www.ucas.com/advisers/qualification-reform/qualification-reform-timeline](http://www.ucas.com/advisers/qualification-reform/qualification-reform-timeline).

## Qualification reform statements

A number of universities and colleges have released statements explaining how they will accommodate qualification reform. In England, Northern Ireland, and Wales, these tend to focus on A level and GCSE changes, whereas in Scotland, the statements explain how a particular university or college will accommodate the flexibility that Curriculum for Excellence introduces. These statements can be found at [www.ucas.com/advisers/qualification-reform/qualification-reform](http://www.ucas.com/advisers/qualification-reform/qualification-reform).

## Qualification reform and the UCAS reference

In 2014/15, the Supporting Professionalism in Admissions (SPA) programme set up a National Expert Think Tank (NETT), consisting of practitioners from a range of higher education providers, and representatives from SPA and UCAS, to consider the impact of pre-HE qualifications and curriculum reform throughout the UK.

One of the outputs from this session was guidance to schools and colleges about what higher education providers would like to see included in an applicant's reference, considering the changing qualifications landscape. The guidance can be found at [www.ucas.com/file/44941/download?token=-Ih75Nko](http://www.ucas.com/file/44941/download?token=-Ih75Nko).

**We hope this guide provides you with valuable information about qualification reform. If you have any questions, please contact [qualsinfo@ucas.ac.uk](mailto:qualsinfo@ucas.ac.uk).**



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The UCAS logo is located in the bottom right corner of the page. It consists of the letters 'UCAS' in a bold, sans-serif font. The letter 'A' is stylized with a red triangle pointing upwards, and the letter 'S' is also stylized with a red triangle pointing upwards. The logo is set against a white background that is part of a larger graphic element.