

UPDATE SESSION.....UPDATE SESSION.....UPDATE SESSION.....

THE IMPLICATIONS FOR INFORMATION, ADVICE AND GUIDANCE OF CURRICULUM CHANGES AT 'A' LEVEL and GCSE.

Tim Miller and Barbara Hamnett MBE, CLCH Associates,

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GCSE Changes

2015-2017

Key changes to GCSE

- **Structure**

Linear, exams in the summer (November resits for maths and English language only for those aged 16+)

- **Assessment**

Exam only where possible, other forms of assessment where necessary to assess essential subjects skills

- **Tiering**

Only where necessary - eg Maths and Science

- **Grading**

New numbered scale from 9 to 1, 9 is the highest

Timeline for GCSE changes; Phase 1

First teaching in September 2015:

- Maths – exam only, tiered
- English literature – exam only, not tiered
- English language – exam only, speaking assessment reported separately, not tiered

Timeline Phase 2

First teaching in September 2016:

Geography	Biology	Art
History	Chemistry	Dance
Languages (Ancient)	Physics	Drama
Languages (Modern)	Combined Sciences	Music
Citizenship Studies	Computing	Food and Nutrition
Religious Studies		PE

Timeline.....Phase 3

First teaching in September 2017 includes the following:

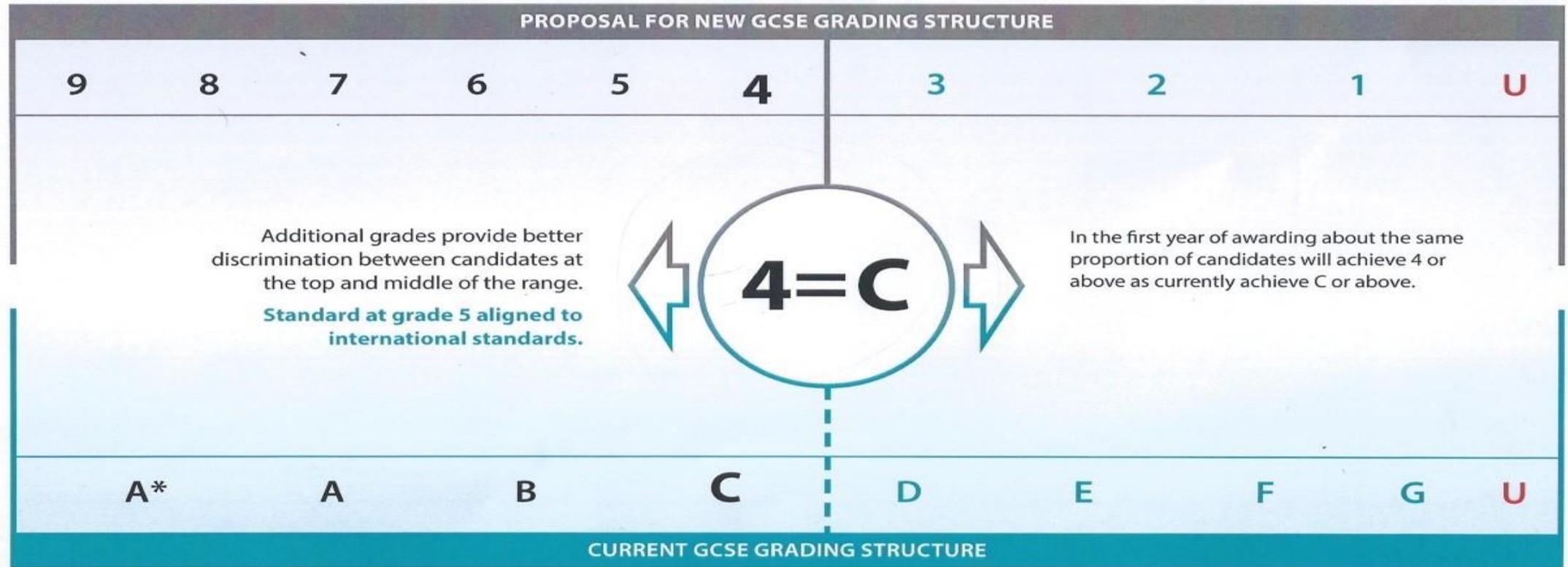
Astronomy	Economics	Media Studies
Business	Electronics	Psychology
Classical Civilisation	ICT	Sociology
Design & Technology		Statistics

For full list of subjects visit OFQUAL website: www.gov.uk/government/organisations/ofqual

- All existing GCSEs will either be replaced or withdrawn by 2017.
- Legacy qualifications (ie the current GCSE specifications) will be available for re-sitting. Query if any will be available summer after last normal Yr 11 sitting)
(definite that current Maths/English GCSEs will be available until Nov 2016)

What is a "Pass"?

All grades 9 to 1 will be passes. It will be for users to decide what grades they require from candidates to meet their purposes.



GCSE grading structure

Key Points:

- The new grading structure will provide scope for greater differentiation than the current one
- The same proportion of students who would have been awarded a C or above should be awarded a 4 or above *initially*.
- New grade 5 = approx. half to two thirds of a grade higher than that required for current grade C, benchmarked internationally.
- Same proportion who would have got an A & A* should be awarded a grade 7 or above.
- New grade 9 awarded to smaller proportion than currently get A*.
- National reference tests to help identify changes in performance between cohorts.
- Grade 5 will be the new measure of threshold of a 'good' GCSE.

A Level Changes

2015-2017

Key Changes

- A Level and AS Level to be **de-coupled** so no marks from AS count towards final A Level grade (currently AS is worth 50%)
- All subjects to be linear
- Some limited coursework allowed in subjects like English and History (20% max.)
- Science practical exam grades will be reported as a separate result and will not count towards the main grade
- Phased introduction of the changes in terms of when subjects introduced
- The level of challenge should be broadly the same- though students may not think that when revising for many more hours of exams in summer of Year 13!

A Level changes : Phase 1

First teaching in September 2015:

Reformed A levels and AS qualifications in the following:

- English Language* English Literature* English Language & Literature*
- Biology Chemistry Physics Computer Science*
- Art and Design **
- Business Studies
- Economics
- History *
- Psychology
- Sociology

* =coursework allowed

** = 100% non examined

A Level changes: Phase 2

First teaching in September 2016:

- Dance
- Drama / Theatre Studies
- Geography
- Modern foreign and ancient languages
- Music
- Physical Education
- Religious studies

A Level changes : Phase 3

First teaching in September 2017:

The subjects include:

Maths Further Maths

Archaeology

Design and Technology

Govt and Politics

History of Art

Information Technology

Law

Media Studies

The AS Level Qualification

- Stand-alone – does not count towards the A level grade
- Assessment – by exam only where possible, at end of course.
(exceptions eg Art and Design - 100% non-exam assessment)
- Potentially co-teachable with first year of A level
- Challenge – less demanding than an A level, same standard as current AS
- Resits of any element/component only occurs in May/June if needed.
- **NEW UCAS Tariff:** For applications for 2017 onwards: AS will be worth 40% of an full A level

Visit www.ucas.com for tariff details. These are very different from at present.

SUBJECT FOCUS : ENGLISH LITERATURE

A LEVEL (example from Edexcel)

A LEVEL 3 papers 1 coursework	Genre	Weighting	Study Focus	Studied In Yr 12/13?	Assessment at end of Year 13
Component 1	Drama	30%	1 Shakespeare text 1 other drama text	13 12	Open Book – 2 hrs
Component 2	Prose	20%	2 prose texts- one must be pre 1900	12	Open Book - 1 hr
Component 3	Poetry	30%	Wide range of poetry: -one unseen poem question; -one from a named collection or named poet	12 13	Open Book - 2 hrs
Coursework	2 texts- any genre	20%	Any two texts of any genre	13	

Issues arising from English Specification

- Fewer texts than at present (8 instead of 12) but studied in more detail
- Re-introduces unseen poetry element
- Emphasis on pre-1900 texts
- How easy will it be to cover the syllabus in Year 13 if one has to revisit all Yr 12 texts and study them at a higher level?
- Will this influence schools about whether AS/A level is really co-teachable?
- Small schools will face bigger problem if the co-teachability issue is real
- Significant exam burden in Yr 13: Five hours of exams (often its been only 2 at present + any resit units)
- At AS Level students would sit two papers and do four hours of exams

How do current students feel about the changes at A level?

We interviewed five Year 13 students at a North London Comprehensive school.

Issues raised by the students include:

- Concern re A Level Maths/ Further Maths take up if one has to do all exams in Yr 13 (Govt. still considering this issue)
- MFL student felt doing all exams at end of 2 yrs was a possible advantage
- Revision and preparation will be crucial skills for students
- New subjects- will students hesitate to choose if they have to commit for 2 years?

Implications for Schools and Colleges

- Decide on Sixth Form curriculum model - by 2016 (see next slide). Funding implications?
- UCAS survey (Jan 2015): Many schools and colleges are taking a wait-and-see approach. 65% of respondents will review their programmes once the full suite of revised AS and A levels are available in 2017.
- Review time allocation for GCSE/Key Stage 4 Maths and English
- Ensure all staff, including careers and HE advisors, are fully informed of changes , implications, school or college policy, likely concerns of students /parents and the answers (for all year groups affected now and in future)
- Provide time for course planning and relevant CPD
- Keep up to date with universities' views
- Decide on implications re. in-school assessment, mock exams, preparing students for revision of more material, a transparent system for making predicted grades

Some possible Curriculum Models

1.

Continue as now: most students do four AS Levels and all sit examinations at end of Year 12 before choosing 3 (in most cases) after AS results published.

2.

Students asked at start to opt for 3 A Levels and one identified AS Level. Only the latter is assessed at end of Year 12 to maximise teaching time of others. Still possible to co-teach AS/ A?

3.

Students opt for 3 A Levels and their fourth subject could be drawn from a list of facilitating subject AS Levels or could be an EPQ or a Core Maths Level 3 Qualification.

4

Students opt for four AS subjects but in Spring of Yr. 12 decisions made about which will be taken to A Level and which one will be examined as an AS.

University views King's College London



King's College London:

On fourth AS:

“The College understands that partly as a result of curriculum reform and changes in the post-16 funding landscape, a number of schools and colleges believe that in the future they may not be able to offer students a fourth A-level subject. In these cases the College will waive the requirement for the fourth AS, where applicable, but a **statement must be included in the first few lines of the UCAS reference to inform us of the school's policy** in this regard. The College will review this policy annually as the position for schools and colleges becomes clearer in this area”.

On GCSEs:

“Whilst this new grade has the potential to allow for differentiation between applicants in the most competitive areas, such as Medicine and Dentistry, in the first year that students apply to university with the new grades we will consider Grade 9 and Grade 8 equally. Therefore the College will not use the new Grade 9 until we have evidence that it would be appropriate to use this differentiating tool in the selection process”.

University Views: University of Cambridge

University of Cambridge:

“We remain in favour of the retention of the current link between AS and A2 and the associated generation of UMS results. In the event that A Level reforms proceed as planned, we continue to urge the Government to enable students in all English state schools and colleges to take end of Year 12 examinations, properly moderated by Awarding Bodies....”

“For the 2015-17 cohort of students starting their sixth form studies in an environment where there is likely to be a mixture of reformed and unreformed A Levels, we will continue to use UMS in those subjects that retain it. We strongly encourage potential applicants to take AS Level examinations in at least three, and preferably four, subjects, whether reformed or not, at the end of Year 12. This will provide us with a strong measure of applicants’ recent academic progress, will assist us and the students in judging whether an application to Cambridge is likely to be competitive, and will provide reassurance that grade predictions are not relied upon too heavily in a new system.”

Scenarios which may arise

1. Will tougher, linear A levels dissuade students from choosing 'hard transition from GCSE' subjects (opinions on what these are can vary) or lead more to opt for Vocational Qualifications?

- Maths and Languages issue (see student views)
- Sciences (no practical element included in overall grade)
- Impact on new subjects- eg Economics
- Are Vocational subjects available for students in your school?
- Will schools wish to recommend BTECs if it means student leaves and goes to a college?
- Changes to BTECs have made them more exam based

Scenarios which may arise

2. Student Subject Choice and Guidance

Might 'newly reformed' subjects be thought to have more kudos so will that affect subject choices?

Or are students sometimes sticking with unreformed subjects in 2015 and thus will be getting 50% of 'easier' marks from AS Level?

What should our advice be? What is right for the student?

Russell Group : 'Informed Choices'

<http://www.russellgroup.ac.uk/informed-choices>

Scenarios which may arise

3. Exam entries at AS Level

- Clashes with school or college policy re exam entries: student does not see point of sitting an AS exam in a reformed subject but school policy is that all will do so
- OR student thinks that an AS grade will help him/her show improved performance since GCSE but school policy is to do no AS exams
- Might some schools offer AS exams to some students only- eg those it considers likely applicants for Cambridge?

Scenarios which may arise

4. Institutional issues:

- What should be entry requirement for an A level once new GCSE grading is introduced (remember: students will have English and Maths graded 9-1 from 2017 results). Is a Grade 4 likely to offer a sound basis for doing linear A levels?
- Resit candidates and funding - a student who has just 'messed up' their A Levels needs to stay a whole year to resit. Funding issue for school.
- GCSE advice issues- impact on school curriculum offer of the new performance measures - **Attainment 8** and **Progress 8 + E Bacc**
- A Level results may dip initially- impact on predicted grades accuracy?

Useful Websites

- www.gov.uk/government/organisations/ofqual
- www.edexcel.com www.aqa.org.uk www.ocr.org.uk
- www.ofsted.gov.uk
- www.gov.uk/government/organisations/department-for-education
- www.ucas.com
- www.university.which.co.uk

And of course, keep in touch via
www.centrallondoncareershub.co.uk

Presentation by Barbara Hamnett MBE and Tim Miller