

GCSE/Vocational Grades - What grades can my son/daughter achieve?

Introduction

GCSE and BTEC exams are sat in Year 11 May/June time and these grades are used by colleges, 6th Form and apprenticeships. Some BTEC exams are sat January/February time so please look out for exam timetables.

Results day is held in August.

Top facts about the new GCSEs

We want you to be aware the GCSEs in England changed in 2017. The new GCSEs ensure that students leave school better prepared for work or further study. They cover more challenging content and are designed to match standards in high performing education systems elsewhere in the world.

The table shows the equivalence between the new grading structure with the old grading structure:

GCSE Grading	
New Grading Structure	Old Grading Structure
9	A*
8	
7	A
6	
5	B
4	C
3	D
2	E
1	F
	G
U	U

Standard Pass → 4

For example if your child gets a 5 in Geography this is the same as a grade B, or if you child gets 7 for Maths this is same as a grade A.

The new GCSEs in England have a 9 to 1 scale to better tell the difference between the highest performing students and see clearly between the old and new qualifications. Grade 9 is the highest grade and will be awarded to fewer students than the old A*.

The new GCSE grading scale is not exactly the same as the old A* to G one. However, there are some equal points between the old grades and the new ones, as the diagram above shows:

- The bottom of grade 7 is aligned with the bottom of grade A;
- The bottom of grade 4 is aligned with the bottom of grade C; and
- The bottom of grade 1 is aligned with the bottom of grade G.

The approach used by Ofqual, the qualifications regulator in England, ensures that, all things being equal, mostly the same proportion of students will get grades 1, 4 and 7 and above in the reformed subjects, as would have achieved G, C or A and above in the old system.

Grade 4 and above is recognised as a 'standard pass' in all subjects. A Grade 4 or above is a similar achievement to the old grade C. This is a good achievement as a passport to future study and employment for your child. A grade 4 is the minimum level that your child needs to reach in English and/or maths, otherwise they need to continue to study these subjects as part of their post-16 education. This requirement does not apply to other subjects.

Employers, universities and colleges will continue to set the GCSE grades they require for entry to employment or further study. So in other words if they previously set grade C as their minimum requirement then the nearest equivalent is grade 4. The old A* to G grades will remain valid for future employment or study.

This table shows GCSE and Vocational qualification equivalencies for 2020-2021:

Attainment 8 points values	GCSEs		Vocational Qualifications		
	Reformed GCSE grades	Legacy GCSE grades	Creative Media Production Digital Information Technology Engineering Enterprise (Business Studies) Health & Social Care Performing Arts Sport	Hospitality	
9	9		Level 2		
8.5		A*		D*2	D*2
8	8				
7	7	A		D2	D2
6	6				
5.5		B		M2	M2
5	5				
4	4	C	P2	P2	
3	3	D	Level 1	D*1	
2	2	E		D1	
1.5		F		M1	
1	1	G		P1	P1

Frequently Asked Questions

1 What does it mean to get a grade 4 in English and Maths?

A grade 4 means you have progressed to continue to study at level 3. There is no need to resit English and maths if the grade 4 has been achieved.

2 What is the highest grade achieved if entered for foundation tier?

The range is from 1-5 with a grade 5 now similar to achieving a low grade B.

3 How will grades be set in tiered qualification?

A small number of GCSE 9-1 qualifications will be tiered. These are:

- Mathematics
- Modern foreign languages e.g. French, Spanish etc
- Biology
- Chemistry

- Physics
- Combined Science

4 What grades would I need to become a teacher?

To train to become a teacher you will need:

- Grade 4 in maths and English to teach at secondary level.
- Grade 4 in maths, English and a science subject to teach at primary level.

5 What if a grade 5 or higher is not achieved?

If this is not achieved, then it isn't a "good pass" as described by the government.

6 What is a BTEC?

BTEC Stands for 'Business and Technology Education Council'. BTECs are vocational qualifications rather than traditional academic qualification. This means more units are marked by teachers and one unit is an exam, some exams are online.

7 Who are BTECs for?

BTECs are designed for young people interested in a particular sector or industry but who are not yet sure what job they'd like to do. A BTEC can be studied at level 1 or 2, either alongside academic qualifications or as part of a wider programme of BTECs. BTECs assess students in both coursework and exam elements.

8 What is needed to progress to A Level study?

This will vary according to different subjects and different institutions, however, schools and colleges are likely to ask for similar grades to follow a particular subject at A level. It is important to check the course requirements for this information.

9 What is needed for entry to post 16 courses?

For Post-16 entry at least a 4 or 5 in either English or maths is needed. Some courses at post 16 will need 5 or 6 in English, maths or both.

10 What if I have more questions?

For further information you can contact Mr J Crawley, Assistant Principal; Miss J Bayley, Senior Director for Post-16; Mrs J Jones, Careers Advisor or Mrs K Jangra, Exams Officer at the academy on 01902 493797.

COVID-19 Information

EXAMS 2021

What will happen if 2021 exams don't take place?

The academy will follow government guidelines. At this current moment in time, students should prepare to sit normal exams in all subjects at the normal time.