

GCSE Reforms, 2018

Frequently Asked Questions for Students

1 Can I compare my grade in a reformed GCSE to my grade in an unreformed GCSE?

The new 9-1 grade scale is not directly equivalent to the A*-G scale. However, there are three grade comparison points:

- The bottom of grade 7 is equivalent to the bottom of grade A.
- The bottom of grade 4 is equivalent to the bottom of grade C.
- The bottom of grade 1 is equivalent to the bottom of grade G.

While the two grading scales are not directly comparable, what we can say is that a grade 4 is broadly equivalent to a low to medium grade C, the threshold for a level 2 qualification. A grade 5 is broadly equivalent to a high C to low B. Also, fewer students are expected to get a grade 9 than previously achieved an A*.

2 What does it mean to get a grade 4 in English and maths?

A grade 4 means you have achieved a standard equivalent to a level 2 qualification which should facilitate progression to level 3 study. The government views this as a credible achievement and one that should be valued as a passport to future study and employment. You will not need to resit your English and maths if you have achieved a grade 4.

3 What will I need 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 pursue a particular subject at A level (for example, 4 and above if currently C and above; 5 to 6 and above if currently B; 7 if currently A).

4 What will universities ask for?

Entry criteria to different universities will vary as they are able to set their own criteria. We expect that most universities will ask for a 4 where they would have required a C, and most will ask for an 8 where they might previously have asked for an A* at GCSE.

5 If I am entered for foundation tier, what is the highest grade I can achieve?

Bear in mind that for the foundation tier, the range is from 1- 5 with a grade 5 now similar to achieving a low grade B. As a result, it is likely more students will be entered for foundation tier (as opposed to higher tier) than in previous years.

6 Do I need a 4 or 5 in English literature or language and maths if I want to become a teacher?

If you want to train to teach, you will need to demonstrate:

- a standard equivalent to a GCSE grade C / grade 4 in mathematics and English to teach at secondary level
- a standard equivalent to a GCSE grade C / grade 4 in mathematics, English and a science subject to teach at primary level

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