



## Information for Parents on the new GCSEs (Summer 2017)

You may well be aware that, from this summer, GCSEs in England are changing. The government say that this change is to ensure that young people have the knowledge and skills they need to be better prepared for work or further study. They are more challenging and are designed to match the highest performing education systems elsewhere in the world.

The changes will be rolled out for all GCSEs by 2020, but for this summer, the following facts apply:

1. Our students have sat the newly reformed **Maths** and **English** GCSEs – these had no coursework, an increase in exam time and an increase in content to be learned. For all other GCSEs, the changes do not yet apply (they will still be graded A\*-U, as previously).
2. These GCSEs have a new 9 to 1 grading system.
3. Grade 9 is the highest grade and will be awarded to fewer students than the current A\*.
4. Although the grades from the old to new GCSE do not directly compare, here is the DfE information on how they loosely align. You will see that the grade 7 matches the bottom of the old A grade, the grade 4 matches the bottom of the old C grade and the grade 1 matches the bottom of the old G grade.
5. Although the exams cover more challenging content, the same proportion of students will achieve a grade 1, 4 and 7, as would have achieved a grade G, C or A in the old exams.
6. A **grade 4** is the standard pass in English and Maths – for this year, all students will need to have achieved this, otherwise they will need to continue to study it at post-16.
7. Employers, universities and colleges are allowed to set the GCSE grades they require for employment or further study. For this year, they are currently being told by the government that the nearest equivalent to the previous grade C is a grade 4, which is what they should be asking for as a minimum.
8. Nationally, the measures will be the percentage of students achieving a standard pass (grade 4 and above) and the percentage of students achieving a strong pass (grade 5 and above, loosely equivalent to an old GCSE grade C+, B-). As a result, it is likely fewer students this year will achieve a grade 5-9 in English and Maths, compared to previous achievement of grades A\*C.



Grading new GCSEs from 2017

New grading structure	Current grading structure
9	
8	A*
7	A
6	B
5 <b>STRONG PASS</b>	
4 <b>STANDARD PASS</b>	C
3	D
2	E
1	F
	G
U	U

## FAQs:

### For students:

**1. What does it mean if I get a grade 4 in English and Maths this year?**

A grade 4 means you have achieved the standard required for you to move on to further study (college or 6<sup>th</sup> Form). For this year, you will not need to resit your English and Maths if you have achieved a grade 4.

**2. What will universities ask for?**

Universities can set their own criteria for the grades they require to study there. It is expected, for this year, that most universities will ask for a grade 4 where they would have required a C and a grade 7 where they would have required an A.

**3. What will employers ask for?**

Employers can set their own criteria for the grades they require to employ you. However, they have been told by the government that for this year, a grade 4 is the nearest equivalent to a C grade. This means that a grade 4 is likely to be the minimum grade they ask you to have achieved.

### For parents:

**1. I want my child to aim for the equivalent of a grade C across all subjects, but I am confused as to whether they should be aiming for a 4 or a 5.**

For this year, due to the fact that the same proportion of candidates will get a 4 and above as currently get a C and above, aiming for a 4 and above is the same as aiming for a C and above. This is, and will remain the level that pupils must achieve in order to not be required to continue studying English and Maths post-16. The government has defined a grade 4 as a 'standard' pass. Where employers, FE providers and universities currently accept a grade C, the government expects them to continue recognising a grade 4.

**2. How will employers be informed on the differences with the new grades?**

Employers are working with the DfE and the exams regulator Ofqual to get the information they need on new grades. They have been informed that the new GCSEs are more demanding and that the new grade 4 sits equivalent to the bottom of a C grade.

**3. Will A Levels be changing their grades too?**

No, A levels will retain their current grading system.