

Changes to GCE A Level examinations from September 2013

FAQs for GCE Biology, GCE Chemistry and GCE Physics

Q: What changes are happening to GCE subjects from September 2013?

A: The Government has asked for all Awarding Bodies to remove the availability of January modular examinations for all subjects.

Q: Does this mean that students have to take all exams together?

A: Students can only sit examinations in the May/June examination series. However, students may still take the AS units at the end of Year 12; and then the A2 units at the end of Year 13.

Q: Has the content of the AS or A level changed at all?

A: No, the content remains the same.

Q: Will the format of AS or A2 examination papers change at all?

A: No, the papers remain in the same style, testing the same unit content as at present.

Q: Have cash-in rules changed in any way?

A: Cash-in opportunities are now only available for the May/June examination series. No other change has taken place to cash-in rules.

Q: Will there be any limits on the number of times a unit can be sat (or re-sat) before cash-in?

A: Rules concerning re-sits have not changed, so students may re-sit any number of times before cash-in. However, the availability of examinations in May/June only will limit the potential for most candidates to re-sit. In addition, rules concerning the re-sitting of a whole qualification have not changed, so an AS or A level can be sat as often as required.

Q: Will students be allowed to sit (or re-sit) any number of units at a session, or must they sit all 3 AS units and/or all 3 A2 units at the same time?

A: Students can sit any number of units at a session. For example, a student who sits 6BI01, 6BI02 and 6BI03 in June 2014 can re-sit 6BI02 only in June 2015 and cash-in again for AS Biology.

Q: Have the rules for the award of A* grades changed in any way?

A: No, the rules for the award of A* grades remain the same.

Q: Will January examinations still be available to UK centres outside England?

A: Edexcel will not be offering January examinations to centres in Wales, Scotland or Northern Ireland.

Q: Will January examinations still be available to centres outside the UK?

A: There will be no January examinations outside the UK for the UK-accredited AS and A levels.

Q: When are new AS and A levels expected?

A: New AS and A level qualifications for Biology, Chemistry and Physics are expected to be introduced for first teaching in September 2015.

Q: Will the new AS and A level examinations be linear only?

A: Yes. The proposal from the Secretary of State is that the new courses should be linear, with AS being a stand-alone qualification (i.e. no longer being halfway to A Level). This means that an A Level course would be a two-year linear course. The AS Level course would be either a one-year or a two-year linear course.