

Ofqual research: FAQs

In light of Ofqual's recent research into the perceived level of demand in GCSE Maths, we've provided the answers to some of your frequently asked questions. If you have any further queries, please get in touch with us via TeachingMaths@pearson.com.

Why did Ofqual conduct research for GCSE (9-1) Maths?

Following accreditation of the reformed GCSE (9-1) Mathematics qualifications, concerns (mainly from teachers and from awarding bodies) were expressed about the differences in difficulty of exam boards' sample assessment materials.

The research was conducted to evaluate whether the concerns were valid and the differences sufficient to undermine the teaching, learning and assessment of GCSE (9-1) Mathematics.

Why didn't Ofqual conduct this research for GCSE (9-1) Maths before accreditation?

You can learn more about Ofqual's process on their website (<https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/gcse-reform-regulations-for-mathematics>)

What did the research involve?

The programme of work comprised four complementary studies which focused on the difficulty of exam boards' sample assessment materials and the approach to problem-solving questions. Full details of the research programme can be found on the Ofqual blog (<https://ofqual.blog.gov.uk/>).

What is the main conclusion of the Ofqual research regarding the differences in difficulty?

Ofqual have requested all awarding bodies to make changes to their SAMs, in order to make the level of difficulty in GCSE Maths more comparable.

What is going to happen next?

All awarding organisations have submitted their assessment materials for approval from Ofqual. Ofqual will then carry out a review of the submissions before allowing awarding bodies to publish; this is expected to be completed by 30 June.

Will grade boundaries be provided for these new papers?

We'll be trialling specimen and mock papers with centres in the autumn term to help give an idea of boundaries, which we hope will help you become more comfortable with the new standards.

What does this mean for me and my students?

The specifications are the same across all boards, so you can continue teaching or preparing to teach.