



Joint Council for Qualifications

**GCE examinations - legacy GCE unitised AS
and A-level specifications**

**Entry, aggregation and certification
procedures**

Effective from 1 September 2016

Produced on behalf of:



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Introduction

This document sets out the principal administrative requirements for **legacy GCE (General Certificate of Education) unitised qualifications including GCE in applied subjects.**

It does not apply to the administrative requirements for new GCE AS and A-level linear qualifications, GCSE, Entry Level Certificates, Functional Skills qualifications and Project qualifications.

Centres in England should note that unitised GCE AS and A-level specifications are being phased out over the next few years. AS and A-level specifications are being reviewed and updated, and at the same time moved from modular to linear assessment.

The document is designed for use by those responsible in schools and colleges (centres) for the administration of GCE examinations. The aim is to explain and provide a commentary on the main activities and terms involved.

With regard to **GCE in applied subjects**, candidates generally take three units for an Advanced Subsidiary Applied GCE Single Award, which is a free-standing qualification and may be awarded separately. They may choose to take a further three units to complete the full Advanced Applied GCE Single Award.

Double award qualifications are also available. A double award AS qualification consists of six units and a double award A-level qualification consists of twelve units. There is also a nine unit award, Advanced GCE with Advanced Subsidiary GCE (Additional).

In other **legacy GCE unitised specifications**, candidates generally take two units for an Advanced Subsidiary GCE (AS) qualification, which is a free standing qualification and may be awarded separately. Candidates may choose to take a further two units to complete the full Advanced GCE (A-level) qualification.

Exceptions to this rule are:

- Mathematics;
- Further Mathematics;
- Pure Mathematics;
- Statistics;
- Biology;
- Human Biology;
- Chemistry;
- Physics;
- Electronics;
- Geology;
- Welsh First Language;
- Welsh Second Language; and
- Music (except CCEA).

The above specifications consist of three-unit AS and six-unit A-level qualifications.

Additionally, lesser taught languages (Arabic, Bengali, Biblical Hebrew, Dutch, Gujarati, Japanese, Modern Greek, Modern Hebrew, Panjabi, Persian, Polish, Portuguese and Turkish) consist of one-unit AS and two-unit A-level qualifications.

Chinese is a three-unit qualification (two AS and one A2 unit) and carries 200 uniform marks.

A list of dates for key activities is provided in Appendix 1, page 11, for easy reference.

1. Making entries

Key issue: Entries can lead either to unit results or to qualification awards.

(i) Entries for individual units

An entry is required for each unit which a candidate intends to take in any given examination series. This is necessary so that candidates are provided with the correct examination paper(s) and receive the correct result(s) at the end of the process. See **Appendix 1, page 11**, for final entry dates.

Entries **must** be made by the candidate's centre for the unit(s) for which the candidate has been prepared. Units can be taken in any order.

When entries are made for units, there is no requirement for the candidate to declare the level or title of the qualification which he/she is intending to complete. Some units are common to more than one specification, e.g. Further Mathematics and Mathematics.

(ii) Entries for qualification awards ('cashing in' or aggregation)

Once the candidate has gained or has entered for the appropriate set of units, an entry may then be made for the qualification award. This is known as 'cashing in' or aggregation. It is the indication to the awarding body that the candidate wishes to complete the qualification and receive certification.

Cashing in or aggregation is not automatic. It can only be applied for when the candidate has entered for, or gained the appropriate set of units for his/her chosen qualification. The awarding body must take this as his/her chosen qualification.

Applying to cash in or aggregate **does not** equate to an entry for any particular unit or combination of units. **Specific entries must still be made for any units which the candidate wishes to take in the respective examination series, with a separate entry for the overall qualification.**

Cashing in or aggregation is normally applied for at the same time that entries are made for the candidate's final units. It may also be applied for in the period immediately following receipt of unit results.

Candidates who have sufficient unit results for an award, but have not cashed in or aggregated, may do so retrospectively through their centre. Please see **Appendix 1, page 11**, for submission dates.

The centre must submit the request to the relevant awarding body by the published deadline for the series concerned. Each awarding body will publish its own administrative guidelines, which will detail the method of submitting requests and any fee for this service.

N.B: The Department for Education (DfE) currently expects all maintained schools and colleges (including academies and free schools) in England to 'cash-in' or aggregate candidates' AS units at the end of a one-year AS course (or halfway through a two-year A-level course).

2. Receiving results

Key issue: Unit results are reported as uniform marks and unit grades; qualification results are reported as grades.

For all GCE units (including Applied GCE units), grade boundaries are determined at awarding meetings in terms of the raw marks for the unit. These raw mark grade boundaries are then translated on to a uniform mark scale (UMS) which has fixed grade boundaries.

A candidate's unit results are reported as uniform marks. Applied GCE units are normally reported on a 100-point scale. The maximum uniform mark for other GCE units depends on the weighting of the unit and normally varies between 60 and 140.

The uniform mark allows a grade equivalent to be calculated for each unit, which may also be provided by an awarding body. Uniform mark scales are given in **Appendix 2, page 12**.

Awarding bodies will provide for each unit, as a minimum:

- the unit title;
- the candidate's UMS mark for the unit; **and**
- the examination series in which the unit was taken.

Information enabling UMS marks to be equated to GCE grades will also be provided.

If a candidate has applied to cash in or aggregate, a qualification result will also be issued. The result will be reported as a grade which is calculated by adding up the best uniform marks for each unit required.

Candidates will be awarded Grade A* if they achieve Grade A for the full A-level (i.e. at least 160, 320 or 480 uniform marks in the 2, 4 or 6 unit A-levels respectively) **and 90% or more of the available uniform marks from their A2 units** (i.e. 90, 180 or 270 uniform marks for the A2 units in the 2, 4 or 6 unit A-levels respectively). Special rules apply to Mathematics and Applied GCE specifications – please see **Appendix 2, page 12**.

Certificates will show for each subject, **as a minimum**:

- the subject title;
- the qualification;
- the subject grade; **and**
- the examination series in which the award was made.

3. Re-sits

Key issue: Any unit can be re-sat irrespective of whether the qualification is to be cashed in, subject to the availability of the legacy GCE unitised AS or A-level specification in a future examination series. Centres should seek guidance on future assessment opportunities from the relevant awarding body.

If a candidate has claimed AS certification, he/she may still re-sit one or more AS units in addition to A2 units prior to cashing in for an A-level award.

CCEA centres **must** study the document *Re-sit and Aggregation rules for candidates beginning courses in September 2013 or after*, issued by CCEA in April 2015.

Figure 1 shows a possible scenario for a candidate who started a two-year legacy GCE unitised course in September 2015.

June 2016	June 2017
Unit 1	Unit 2
Unit 2	Unit 3
	Unit 4
AS award claimed	A-level award claimed

The table above depicts a candidate who completes a **four-unit legacy GCE unitised qualification** over two examination series.

The candidate takes Unit 1 and Unit 2 in June 2016. The candidate claims an AS award in June 2016.

The candidate re-sits Unit 2 as well as entering for Unit 3 and Unit 4 in June 2017. The candidate claims an A-level award in June 2017.

When the A-level award is claimed in June 2017, the best of the attempts at each unit will be considered, and the award will be made up as follows:

- Unit 1 – June 2016
- Unit 2 – the better result from the two attempts
- Unit 3 – June 2017
- Unit 4 – June 2017

The candidate may claim a new AS award in June 2017, as unit results obtained prior to the previous certification will be available for re-use. If the candidate claims a new AS award in June 2017, it will be made up as follows:

- Unit 1 – June 2016
- Unit 2 – the better result from the two attempts

If the candidate is not satisfied with the A-level award claimed in June 2017, he/she can, subject to the availability of the specification in June 2018, re-sit one or more units (**AS and/or A2 units**) and request A-level certification again.

4. Cashing in awards – the options and actions

This section considers the options and actions available to a candidate who either wishes to finish his/her qualification **or** intends to take the qualification further.

Centres should seek guidance on future assessment opportunities from the relevant awarding body.

(i) Options and actions for the candidate intending to finish the qualification

This information applies to a candidate who has completed the units for a GCE AS or A-level qualification and who has no intention of proceeding to a further award.

- If the candidate is satisfied with his/her grade (cashing in being applied for at the time the entry was made) no further action is necessary.
- If cashing in was not applied for at the time of entry, it can be applied for retrospectively after the issue of results and by the published date for late subject awards:

20 September 2016 for the June 2016 examination series

20 September 2017 for the June 2017 examination series

- If the candidate is not satisfied with his/her grade and wishes to improve it, one or more of the units may be re-sat and certification requested again in a future examination series. (**Subject to the availability of the legacy GCE unitised AS or A-level specification.**) Where a unit consists of more than one option, the candidate may take a new optional unit. The best result for each unit will count towards the new award.

(ii) Options and actions for the candidate intending to take the qualification further

This information applies to a candidate who has completed the units for a GCE AS or A-level qualification and who wishes to take that qualification further.

- The candidate can proceed to a further qualification whether or not the first award is cashed in or aggregated. Individual units may be re-sat in a future examination series and count towards the further qualification. (**Subject to the availability of the legacy GCE unitised AS or A-level specification.**)
- If the candidate is satisfied with his/her grade (cashing in being applied for at the time the entry was made) no further action is necessary.
- If cashing in was not applied for at the time of entry, it can be applied for retrospectively after the issue of results and by the published date for late subject awards:

20 September 2016 for the June 2016 examination series

20 September 2017 for the June 2017 examination series

- If the candidate is not satisfied with his/her grade and wishes to improve it, one or more of the units may be re-sat and certification requested again in a future examination series. (**Subject to the availability of the legacy GCE unitised AS or A-level specification.**) Where a unit consists of more than one option, the candidate may take a new optional unit. The best result for each unit will count towards the new award.

Figures 2a and 2b on **page 7** summarise the courses of action available to a candidate who applied to cash in when entries were made and to a candidate who did not apply to cash in at that stage. Each box represents a stage of the process, and each arrow represents a choice that can be made at that stage.

Figure 2a Options for those who have requested to cash in – follow any route through

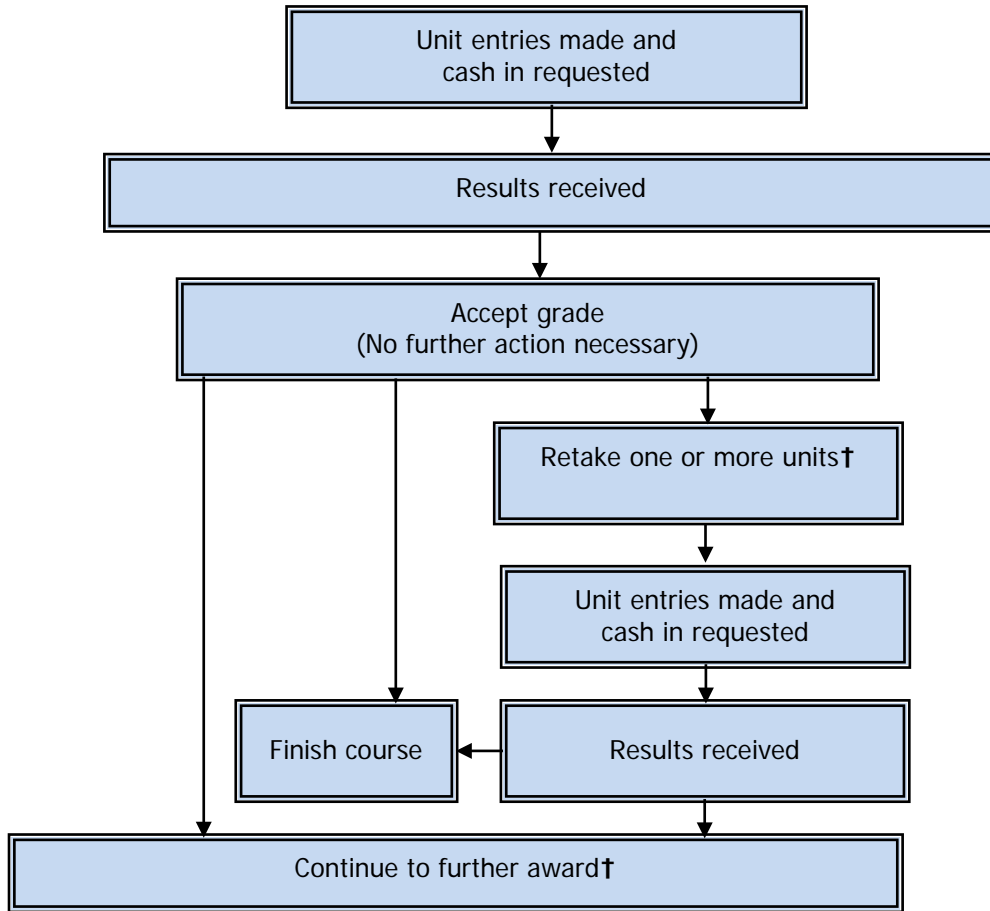
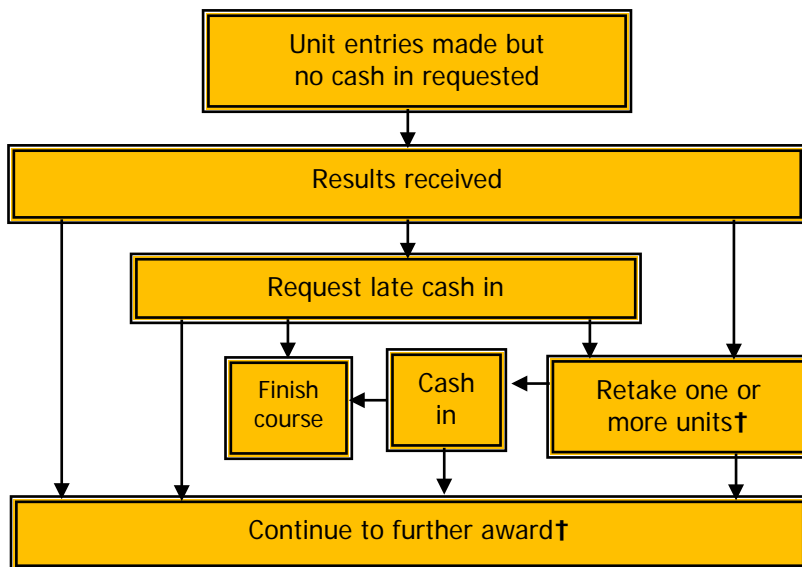


Figure 2b Options for those who have not requested to cash in – follow any route through



† (Subject to the availability of the legacy GCE unitised AS or A-level specification in a future examination series.)

5. To cash in or not to cash in?

The decision on whether or not to cash in should be taken in light of an individual candidate's requirements. There are implications for either course of action, and these are outlined below.

Centres should seek guidance on future assessment opportunities from the relevant awarding body.

(i) If the candidate requests to cash in the qualification

- He/she will receive a grade and a certificate.
- Where the candidate intends to apply for higher education through the UCAS system, awarding bodies will report the qualification grade and the corresponding contributing unit grades to UCAS, and the qualification grade must be declared on UCAS forms.
- Individual units can still be re-sat and count towards the next level of award. **(Subject to the availability of the legacy GCE unitised AS or A-level specification in a future examination series.)**
- The candidate may attempt to improve the grade by re-taking one or more units (and applying to cash in again). **(Subject to the availability of the legacy GCE unitised AS or A-level specification in a future examination series.)**

(ii) If the candidate does not cash in the qualification

- No grade or certificate is issued.
- He/she can choose what to tell UCAS – information about unit results can be included in the student's personal statement or in the referee's report if desired.
- The individual unit results can be improved. **(Subject to the availability of the legacy GCE unitised AS or A-level specification in a future examination series.)**
- The unit results remain in the 'bank'. This means he/she can have a change of mind and cash in at a later date to claim the grade to which he/she is entitled. Claims must be made within the stipulated period following an examination series. There is no requirement to sit any further units.

N.B: The Department for Education (DfE) currently expects all maintained schools and colleges (including academies and free schools) in England to 'cash-in' or aggregate candidates' AS units at the end of a one-year AS course (or halfway through a two-year A-level course).

6. Enquiries about results and access to scripts

If there is concern about the result of a unit following the publication of results, the centre can submit an application for an enquiry about results to the relevant awarding body. Dates by which applications have to be made, full details of the services available and how to apply for them, are given in the JCQ publication *Post Results Services – Information and guidance to centres* - <http://www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/post-results-services>

Centres **must** submit applications for enquiries about results within the enquiry period immediately following the publication of results. **It is not possible to make an enquiry about a unit taken in a previous series.** An enquiry made in relation to an overall qualification grade is limited to a clerical check, ensuring that the aggregation of the unit marks has been correctly carried out.

The outcome of an enquiry into an externally assessed unit or an internally assessed unit can lead to the uniform mark being confirmed, raised or lowered. If cash-in has been requested, the qualification grade may be confirmed, raised or lowered.

However, the qualification grade for awards entered in the same series is protected in the case of internally-assessed units. Centres should be aware that although the AS grade will be protected in the event of an internally-assessed AS unit being lowered as a result of a moderation review, the lower mark will contribute to any subsequent A-level award.

Centres may also submit applications to awarding bodies for the return of examination scripts to support teaching and learning, or to request a priority copy of a script before deciding whether to submit an enquiry about results.

Reference must be made to the JCQ publication *Post Results Services – Information and guidance to centres* - <http://www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/post-results-services>

7. Arrangements for GCE AS candidates transferring between specifications or awarding bodies midway through a GCE A-level course (having completed and certificated a GCE AS award)

Legacy GCE unitised A-level specifications

GCE AS candidates who move to another centre or who, for other reasons, have to change their programme of study **part way through a legacy GCE unitised A-level course** may be eligible to transfer a GCE AS award between specifications and/or awarding bodies. (**Subject to the availability of the legacy GCE unitised AS or A-level specification in a future examination series.**)

The specifications must have the same subject titles, under arrangements agreed between the regulators and the Joint Council for Qualifications.

Full details of the transfer of credit process for **legacy GCE unitised AS qualifications** is given in the JCQ document *Information for centres – Arrangements for GCE AS candidates transferring between specifications or awarding bodies midway through a GCE A-level course (having completed and certificated a GCE AS award)* - <http://www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/entries/gce-entry-information-incltransfer-of-credit>

Appendix 1

Key dates in 2016/2017

GCE examinations	For entry and certification in June 2017
Final date to apply for transfer of credit arrangements	21 October 2016
Final date for entries	21 February 2017
Submission of GCE, including Applied GCE, coursework marks	15 May 2017
Date of first examination on common timetable	15 May 2017
Date of final examination on common timetable	29 June 2017
Restricted release of results to centres only	16 August 2017
Release of results to candidates	17 August 2017
Final date to apply for late cash in	20 September 2017
Issue of certificates	by 7 November 2017

Uniform mark scales

GCE UNIT RESULTS

The minimum uniform marks required for each grade equivalent:

Unit grade equivalent	A	B	C	D	E
where maximum uniform mark is 60	48	42	36	30	24
where maximum uniform mark is 78	62	55	47	39	31
where maximum uniform mark is 80	64	56	48	40	32
where maximum uniform mark is 90	72	63	54	45	36
where maximum uniform mark is 100	80	70	60	50	40
where maximum uniform mark is 105	84	74	63	53	42
where maximum uniform mark is 110	88	77	66	55	44
where maximum uniform mark is 111	89	78	67	56	44
where maximum uniform mark is 120	96	84	72	60	48
where maximum uniform mark is 140	112	98	84	70	56
where maximum uniform mark is 200	160	140	120	100	80
where maximum uniform mark is 300	240	210	180	150	120

GCE QUALIFICATION GRADES

The maximum uniform mark for the qualification and the minimum uniform mark required for each grade:

Qualification grade	A	B	C	D	E	
GCE Advanced Subsidiary (AS) where maximum uniform mark is 100	80	70	60	50	40	
GCE Advanced Subsidiary (AS) where maximum uniform mark is 200	160	140	120	100	80	
GCE Advanced Subsidiary (AS) where maximum uniform mark is 300	240	210	180	150	120	
Qualification grade	A*	A	B	C	D	E
GCE Advanced (A-level) where maximum uniform mark is 200	see note	160	140	120	100	80
GCE Advanced (A-level) where maximum uniform mark is 400	see note	320	280	240	200	160
GCE Advanced (A-level) where maximum uniform mark is 600	see note	480	420	360	300	240

Note The general rule for the award of A* is:

- a grade A overall at A-level and
- 90% of the maximum uniform mark on the aggregate of the A2 units

The rule in Mathematics is:

- a grade A overall at A-level and
- 90% of the maximum uniform mark on the aggregate of Units C3 and C4

The rule in Further Mathematics is:

- a grade A overall at A-level and
- 90% of the maximum uniform mark on the aggregate of the three best A2 units

APPLIED GCE UNIT RESULTS

The minimum uniform marks required for each grade equivalent:

Unit grade equivalent	A	B	C	D	E
Units equally weighted maximum uniform mark is 100	80	70	60	50	40

APPLIED GCE QUALIFICATION GRADES

The minimum uniform mark for the qualification and the minimum uniform mark required for each grade:

Qualification grade	A	B	C	D	E
Advanced Subsidiary Applied GCE Single Award maximum uniform mark is 300	240	210	180	150	120

Qualification grade	A*	A	B	C	D	E
Advanced Applied GCE Single Award maximum uniform mark is 600	see note	480	420	360	300	240

Note The general rule for the award of A* is:

- a grade A overall at A-level and
- 90% of the maximum uniform mark on the aggregate of the A2 units

Qualification grade	AA	AB	BB	BC	CC	CD	DD	DE	EE
Advanced Subsidiary Applied GCE Double Award maximum uniform mark is 600	480	450	420	390	360	330	300	270	240

Qualification grade	A*A	AA	AB	BB	BC	CC	CD	DD	DE	EE
Advanced with Advanced Subsidiary Applied GCE (Additional) maximum uniform mark is 900	see note	720	675	630	585	540	495	450	405	360

Note The general rule for the award of A*A is:

- a grade AA overall and
- 90% of the maximum uniform mark on the aggregate of the three A2 units

Qualification grade	A*A*	A*A	AA	AB	BB	BC	CC	CD	DD	DE	EE
Advanced Applied GCE Double Award maximum uniform mark is 1200	see note	see note	960	900	840	780	720	660	600	540	480

Note The general rule for the award of A*A* is:

- a grade AA overall and
- 90% of the maximum uniform mark on the aggregate of the six A2 units

The general rule for the award of A*A is:

- a grade AA overall and
- 90% of the maximum uniform mark on the aggregate of the three best A2 units

Examples of GCE aggregation and certification

Examples of GCE Mathematics aggregation and certification may be found in the JCQ publication *GCE Mathematics Aggregation Rules – Guidance for Centres* - <http://www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/entries/gce-maths-information>

Rule

A candidate who has previously claimed a qualification award will be able to claim a subsequent award for the same subject, provided that an entry is made for at least one unit which contributes to the award. **(Subject to the availability of the legacy GCE unitised AS or A-level specification in a future examination series.)**

Centres should seek guidance on future assessment opportunities from the relevant awarding body.

Example 1

A GCE AS qualification consists of Units 1 and 2.

Candidate M certificated AS level in June 2016. He/she re-takes Unit 2 in June 2017.

A new AS level award can be claimed.

Example 2

A GCE AS qualification consists of Units 1-3. The corresponding A-level qualification consists of Units 1-6.

Candidate N certificated A-level in June 2016. He/she re-takes Units 3, 4 and 5 in June 2017.

A new AS award can be claimed, as well as a new A-level award, in June 2017 (because Unit 3 contributes to both awards). If the candidate had re-taken Units 4 and 5 but not Unit 3 in June 2017, he/she could have claimed a new A-level award but not a new AS award.

Example 3

A GCE AS qualification consists of Units 1 and 2. The corresponding A-level consists additionally of Units 3a or 3b or 3c, and 4a or 4b or 4c. There are no restrictions on how the options in Units 3 and 4 are combined.

A candidate may certificate AS level with Units 1 and 2.

A candidate may certificate A-level with any one of the following combinations of units:

- 1, 2, 3a, 4a
- 1, 2, 3a, 4b
- 1, 2, 3a, 4c
- 1, 2, 3b, 4a
- 1, 2, 3b, 4b
- 1, 2, 3b, 4c
- 1, 2, 3c, 4a
- 1, 2, 3c, 4b
- 1, 2, 3c, 4c

(Where a candidate has results for both options of a unit, e.g. a result for Unit 3a in addition to a result for Unit 3b, the better result will count towards certification.)

Candidate O certificated AS level in June 2016 having taken Units 1 and 2. He/she also took Unit 3b in June 2016. He/she then takes Units 3a and 4a in June 2017.

The results from both Unit 3a and Unit 3b are eligible to count towards certification at A-level.

A new AS award cannot be claimed since no AS units have been re-taken.