

Edexcel International GCSE update

Over the past year, we have consulted with teachers, higher education representatives, subject expert groups and other key stakeholders to gain feedback on our suite of Edexcel International GCSE qualifications.

Your feedback

The feedback we received through the consultation process highlighted that International GCSEs are valued by teachers and learners across the world. It indicated that you would welcome some updates to the qualification suite, rather than large scale changes, including more internationally relevant content. You also requested a grading scale that provides learners with the best possible progression pathways to GCE A levels, International A Levels and university. Taking into consideration your feedback, we are making a number of updates to our International GCSE qualifications suite, as outlined below.

Updated International GCSE qualifications

Designed for international students. In response to your feedback, we plan to retain the best elements of the current International GCSE qualifications that you have told us you value. In addition, we plan to introduce more international content, including the addition of further international content topics and the use of local contexts where possible. This is to ensure that these qualifications are even more relevant and engaging for students around the world, allowing for learning in a local context to a global standard. We will also update the content of the qualifications so that they reflect the latest thinking in each subject.

Rewarding outstanding academic achievement. With the introduction of a new 9-1 grading scale for GCSEs in England, the A* grade available for the current International GCSEs does not neatly align with the top grade 9. Grade 9 represents a higher level of attainment than the current A* grade. After extensive consultation with schools and wider stakeholders, we have taken the decision to introduce the 9-1 grading scale for the updated suite of International GCSEs. This is to give the very highest performers the opportunity to achieve a grade 9, rewarding outstanding academic achievement.

With 9 levels of performance rather than 8, there is greater differentiation of the most able at the top end of the grading scale, which better identifies students' potential, putting you in a stronger position to help students make informed decisions about their A level and university choices. The new numerical grading scale links grade 5 with what the best available evidence indicates is the average PISA performance in high performing countries such as Finland, Canada, the Netherlands and Switzerland, providing international performance benchmarking. More information about the new 9-1 grading scale can be found below.

Structured and supported transition. Through the consultation process, you expressed a preference for the single introduction of a new grading scale. As such, we will ensure that the full updated International GCSE 9-1 suite is available for first teaching in September 2017, with first assessment in May / June 2019. By introducing the full suite of updated International GCSEs in 2017, we aim to provide teaching teams with a structured transition over to the refreshed specifications with more preparation time. We will equip you with dedicated teaching and learning resources to support the effective delivery of these updated qualifications in time for first teaching.

For schools outside of the UK that would like to begin teaching updated International GCSE qualifications as soon as possible, the following subjects will be available for first teaching in September 2016, with first assessment in May / June 2018; English Language A, English Language B, English Literature, Mathematics A and Mathematics B.

Comprehensive support and resources. We will provide you with a wider range of teaching and learning materials, resources and training to support the best possible learner outcomes, in time for first teaching. This support includes schemes of work, exemplar materials, comprehensive textbooks and interactive resources, digital services and tailored International GCSE teacher training. This will complement the wider Pearson support that exists for Edexcel qualifications, such as ResultsPlus, ResultsPlus Direct, and Exam Wizard. (→)

Subject update

At this stage, we can confirm that the following International GCSE subjects will be updated and available for first teaching in September 2017:

September 2017				
English Language A*	Mathematics A*	Chinese	Geography	Biology
English Language B*	Mathematics B*	French	History	Human Biology
English Literature*	Further Pure Mathematics	German		Chemistry
English as a Second Language		Spanish		Physics
				Double Award Science

*These subjects will be available for first teaching in September 2016.

In addition to this list, we are currently researching all remaining International GCSE subjects, as well as some new subjects. We will be able to confirm the full International GCSE subject list for first teaching in September 2017 with you by the end of this year. We are taking the time to complete this research to make sure that we offer the complete range of subjects your learners need to seamlessly progress to the next level of learning.

All our current International GCSE subjects will continue to be available until a last assessment date of May / June 2018 or January 2019 for subjects with current January availability. This will mean a final two-year cohort start date of September 2016.

How you can continue to contribute

We would be grateful if you can continue to participate in our International GCSE consultation through our online subject expert panels. By taking part, you will be able to actively contribute to all aspects of the updated qualifications, including the assessment model, content topics and subject aims. You will also be able to suggest other International GCSE subjects we should consider redeveloping for first teaching in September 2017.

To get involved, please complete this [online form](#).

Next steps

To keep up to date with the latest information about planned updates to our International GCSE qualification suite, please subscribe to our monthly [e-newsletter](#). In the meantime, if you have any queries, please contact your Regional Development Manager in the first instance.

Yours faithfully,



Lesley Davies OBE
Senior Vice President
Pearson Qualifications International

International GCSE 9-1 grading scale

We appreciate that the move from an A* to G to a 9-1 grading scale is a significant change. To support you through the transition, we will make an information pack and training on the new 9-1 grading scale for International GCSEs available to you in due course, so that you are fully confident with the new standard and assessment criteria.

In the meantime, the diagram below is a good starting point in terms of understanding how the new scale maps to the existing A*- G grading structure.

CURRENT	NEW INTERNATIONAL GCSE	
A*	9	
A	8	
	7	
B	6	
	5	GOOD PASS
C	4	5 and above = top of C and above
	3	AWARDING
D	2	4 and above = bottom of C and above
E	1	
F		
G		
U	U	

In summary, the higher the number the better the result, with 9 as the top grade decreasing down to 1, with the bottom of a grade 1 aligned with the bottom of a grade G.

For more information visit
qualifications.pearson.com/edexcel