

GCSE reform updated 24th July 2014 DFE website Nicky Morgan Sec State Education

We are reforming the content of GCSEs to make them more challenging so pupils are better prepared for further academic or vocational study, or for work.

The changes we are introducing are:

- the [English language GCSE](#) will require better reading skills and good written English
- the [English literature GCSE](#) will encourage students to read, write and think critically; it will assess students on challenging and substantial whole texts and on shorter unseen texts
- the [mathematics GCSE](#) will provide greater coverage of areas such as ratio, proportion and rates of change; it will require all students to master the basics, and will be more challenging for those aiming to achieve top grades
- [science GCSEs](#) will cover new content, including the human genome, life cycle analysis and space physics, and they will be more mathematically challenging
- the [history GCSE](#) will require students to study more historical periods; it will cover 3 eras - medieval, early modern and modern - and will concentrate more on British history
- the [geography GCSE](#) will require pupils to use maths and statistics, and will concentrate more on UK geography; it will also require students to carry out at least 2 pieces of fieldwork
- [languages GCSEs](#) will be more demanding and most exam questions in modern languages will be asked in the respective foreign language

More information on the [content of revised GCSEs](#) is available.

For the regulatory aspects of the new GCSEs, Ofqual has introduced:

- a new grading scale that uses the numbers 1 to 9 to identify levels of performance, with 9 being the top grade
- a structure where all assessment happens at the end of the course and content is not divided into modules
- exams as the default method of assessment, except where they cannot provide valid assessment of the skills required
- new rules on tiering, which will only apply for subjects where untiered papers do not allow all students to demonstrate their knowledge and skills, or will not stretch the most able

Details of [Ofqual's consultation on the regulatory aspects of proposed changes to GCSEs](#) is available from the Ofqual website.