

1st September 2015

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Dear Colleague

Changes to A levels and GCSEs in Wales that will affect OCR Centres from September 2015

In October 2014 we wrote to you outlining how the Welsh Government is moving forward with the reform of A Levels and GCSEs in Wales. The first wave of reform changes will come into effect this September and we want to ensure that OCR centres understand how this will impact them and the support we have in place for you.

The primary change for maintained schools in Wales is that centres commencing teaching a two-year GCSE, AS or A Level, or a one-year AS Level course this September will need to take the reformed [WJEC](#) ‘Wales – only’ qualifications. The qualifications concerned are detailed in the table below.

Changes to GCSEs

The Welsh Government has published Qualification Principles for GCSEs and, for specific subjects, Subject Principles. GCSEs reformed for Wales will continue to use the grading structure of A* to G grades. ‘Wales – only’ specifications developed by WJEC have been introduced in English and Maths for first teaching in September 2015.

Therefore, OCR GCSEs in the subjects listed below will not be available for teaching to maintained schools in Wales from September 2015. The final assessment opportunities for these qualifications are as follows:

GCSEs			
Subject	Current/Legacy GCSEs	Final Assessment opportunity (first time entries)	Retake opportunity (TBC)
English	English - J350 English Language - J355	June 2016	November 2016
	English Literature - J360	June 2016	N/A
Mathematics	Mathematics A - J562 Mathematics B - J567	June 2016	November 2016
	Applications of Mathematics - J925 Methods in Mathematics - J926	June 2016	N/A

Please note: the WJEC provision of reformed GCSEs in English and Maths is not a direct match to the current OCR provision in these subject areas. There are differences in the number of specifications available in each subject area and their focus. Further details can be found on the WJEC website <http://www.wjec.co.uk/>.

Changes to A Levels

A qualification with the AS decoupled from the A Level will not meet the requirements of the Qualification Principles so will not be accredited for delivery in Wales. 'Wales – only' specifications developed by WJEC have been introduced in a range of subjects for first teaching in September 2015.

Therefore, OCR A Levels in the subjects listed below will not be available for teaching to maintained schools in Wales from September 2015. The final assessment opportunities for these qualifications are as follows:

GCE AS and A Level			
Subject	Current Qualifications	Final Assessment opportunity (first time entries)	Retake opportunity (TBC)
Art & Design	Art and Design - H160 / H560	June 2016	June 2017
	Applied Art and Design - H013 / H413 Applied Art and Design (Double Award) - H213 / H613	June 2017*	June 2018*
Business	Business Studies - H030 / H430	June 2016	June 2017
	Applied Business - H026 / H426 Applied Business (Double Award) - H226 / H626	June 2017*	June 2018*
Computer Science	Computing - H047 / H447	June 2016	June 2017
Economics	Economics - H061 / H461	June 2016	June 2017
English	English Language - H069 / H469	June 2016	June 2017
	English Literature - H071 / H471		
	English Language and Literature - H073 / H473		
History	History A - H106 / H506	June 2016	June 2017
	History B - H108 / H508		
Psychology	Psychology - H168 / H568	June 2016	June 2017
Science	Biology - H021 / H421 Chemistry A - H034 / H434 Chemistry B (Salters) - H035 / H435 Physics A - H158 / H558 Physics B (Advancing Physics) - H159 / H559 Science (AS only) - H178	June 2016	June 2017
	Human Biology - H023 / H423	June 2017*	June 2018*
Sociology	Sociology - H181 / H581	June 2016	June 2017

*** June 2017 final assessment opportunity only for centres that have previously offered these qualifications. For all other centres, the final assessment opportunity is June 2016.**

Further GCSEs and A Levels will be reformed for use in Wales for first teaching in September 2016 and September 2017, along the same timeline as reform in England. OCR will keep you updated on how the reforms impact OCR centres in Wales.

There are two points to note:

- This announcement relates only to qualifications listed above for first teaching from September 2015. Exam Boards may continue to offer A Level, AS and GCSE qualifications in Wales in subjects not being revised for first teaching from September 2015, until such subjects are revised for first teaching from September 2016 or beyond.
- The Welsh Minister for Education and Skills has been clear that the independent schools sector in Wales should be free to make its own choice about the qualifications it offers. Officials are working

to clarify and, if necessary, amend legislation to enable Exam Boards to offer GCSE, AS and A Level qualifications to the independent schools sector in Wales which do not meet the requirements of the relevant Qualification Principles (or Subject Principles) above.

All other OCR qualifications are available and we are delighted that the options of Cambridge Technicals and Cambridge Nationals are readily available to schools in Wales with excellent support and resources.

Information and support

For further help guidance on general qualification reform in Wales please do not hesitate to contact the Ireland and Wales Customer Support team at ocr-cymru@ocr.org.uk or by phone on 02921 405 520. You can also visit the Ireland and Wales page of the OCR website at www.ocr.org.uk/contact-us/ireland-and-wales/.

You can also find information on reform of A Levels and GCSEs in Wales on the Qualifications Wales website at <http://www.qualificationswales.org/>.

For details of the 'Wales – only' specifications developed by WJEC for first teaching in September 2015, please see the WJEC website at <http://www.wjec.co.uk/>.

Yours sincerely



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