



A Level A* Frequently Asked Questions

Why was the GCE A introduced?*

The A* was awarded for A Level for the first time in August 2010 (for the June 2010 series). The A* is designed to recognise and reward exceptional performance in the A2 units, which are designed to be more challenging than the AS units.

How is the A awarded?*

The A* at A Level is awarded to candidates who achieve a grade A on the A Level overall (80%), and who **also** achieve at least 90% on the uniform mark scale (UMS) across their A2 units. For example, in a four-unit A Level which has 400 UMS and each unit has 100 UMS, you need to achieve at least 320 UMS overall and at least 180 UMS out of 200 on the A2 units.

The A* is not awarded for individual units or for the AS Level.

Does the A affect any of the other grades?*

No, all of the other grade standards stay the same.

How does the A work for GCE A Level Double Awards?*

Double Awards have a longer grade scale than standard GCEs: A*A*, A*A, AA, AB, BB, BC, CC, CD, DD, DE, EE. To achieve the A*A*, you need to get AA overall and then get at least 90% across all six of the A2 units. If you do not achieve A*A*, it is still possible to gain A*A. To achieve A*A, you need to get an A overall and then get at least 90% across your best three A2 units.

How do I know which are AS and which are A2 units?

It should be clear from your studies which are the AS/A2 units – if you are unsure, take a look at the specifications, which can be downloaded from our website.

My A2 units add up to an A but I got a B overall.*

Why is this?

Before we can award an A*, you need to achieve an A grade across all the A Level units – both AS and A2. In this case, you may not have done as well in your AS units and you may wish to consider whether you should re-sit your AS units to improve your overall grade.

I got an A and someone else got an A but we both have the same UMS. Why is this?*

Even though you have the same UMS as another candidate, your total UMS is made up from both AS and A2 units. Therefore, you may have achieved very highly in your AS units but did not get 90% or more in your A2 units and so did not achieve the A*.

How are GCE Maths and Further Maths different?

The structure of GCE Mathematics is different from other subjects, and so uses a slightly different rule. It is currently possible to achieve A Level Mathematics with four AS and two A2 units or with three AS and three A2 units. Therefore, candidates must get a grade A on the A Level overall and achieve at least 90% of the UMS on the core A2 units combined (units C3 and C4).

It is also possible to achieve GCE Further Mathematics with more than three A2 units. In this case, the A* is calculated in the same way as it is for all other subjects, based on the three best A2 units.

What happens if I don't understand my results?

If you have any queries about your grades, please talk to your school or college, who should be able to explain your results.