

GCSE (9–1) Combined Science A and B

Tiering Guide for Parents and Students

Will my certificate show the tier I sat?

Certificates do not show the tier of entry; they only show the grade achieved.

50% OF MARKS
in Higher Tier papers cover grades from 9-9 to 7-6



KEY

- Higher Tier only
- Higher and Foundation Tier
- Foundation Tier only

What happens if I don't get a 4-4?

On the Higher Tier, if you don't get a 4-4 and miss the safety net of a few marks, you will get a U on your certificate. In 2019, just under 4,500 students got a U across all exam boards.

Is it easier to get a 5-5 on Higher Tier?

Each tier contains 20% common questions. This is used by exam boards to align the standards between tiers. This ensures that it is not easier to get a 4-4 or 5-5 on one tier than another.

50% OF MARKS
in Higher Tier papers cover grades from 6-6 to 4-4

On the Higher Tier there is an allowed 4-3 grade for candidates who just miss the 4-4 grade

There is no UMS in the reformed GCSE. Therefore candidates who miss the allowed 4-3 grade on the Higher Tier receive a U

The highest grade available on the Foundation Tier is 5-5

50% OF MARKS
in Foundation Tier papers cover grades from 5-5 to 3-3

Can I take Foundation Tier papers for some of my Science exams?

As there are only exams at the end of year 11 (no modules), all papers count towards your grade and need to be taken in the same tier.

Which tier should I be entered for if I just achieve a 5-5 in my mock?

If you only just got enough marks for a 5-5, it is recommended that you should take Foundation tier papers. Students who are aiming for a 5-5 are able to access at least twice as many marks in the Foundation Tier papers.

50% OF MARKS
in Foundation Tier papers cover grades from 3-3 to 1-1

What is recommended?

Ofqual recommend that if a student is expected to get a 4-4 or 5-5, they should take the Foundation tier papers.

The advice provided on this sheet is based on feedback received from teachers and advice from Ofqual, and is **for guidance only**. Teachers are best placed to make decisions for their students. The Ofqual blog containing their advice and the statistics used in this resource can be found [here](#).

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