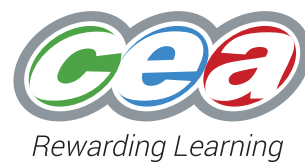


2024



Awarding A* at A Level

Guidance Notes

These guidance notes apply to all CCEA A level qualifications until further notice.

When is A* awarded?

The A* grade recognises, and rewards, outstanding performance at A level.

A* is awarded for A level only. It is not awarded for AS level or for individual units.

Is A* a fixed uniform mark scale (UMS) boundary?

No, A* is not based on a fixed uniform mark scale boundary.

Please note – the requirements to be awarded grade A* can result in students being awarded grade A* with a lower uniform mark total than students awarded grade A.

How is A* awarded in A level qualifications?

To be awarded an A*, students need to meet **both** of the following requirements:

1. achieve a grade A on their full A level qualification (this is awarded to students who score a minimum of 80% of the total uniform marks available for the qualification); and
2. achieve at least 90% of the total uniform marks available for the A2 units.

Please note – the 90% calculation is based on the aggregation of the student's total uniform marks across all A2 units. There is no requirement to achieve 90% of the uniform marks in each individual unit.

How is A* awarded across CCEA's A level qualifications?

The requirements to achieve an A* in CCEA's A level qualifications are identified in **Table 1**.

How is A*A*/A*A awarded across CCEA's Double Award A level qualifications?

The requirements to achieve A*A* and A*A in CCEA's Double Award A level qualifications are identified in **Table 2**.

Practical examples

Worked examples of the A* requirements being applied are available in the **appendix**.

Table 1: Awarding A* across CCEA's A level qualifications

| A Level Structure | Available Uniform Marks† | | | Requirement 1 | Requirement 2 |
|-------------------|--------------------------|-----|-------|--|---|
| | AS | A2 | Total | Achieve overall grade A (minimum 80% of total UMS) | Achieve minimum 90% of total UMS for A2 units |
| 4-unit award | 120 | 180 | 300 | 240+ out of 300 UMS | 162+ out of 180 UMS |
| | History | | | | |

| A Level Structure | Available Uniform Marks† | | | Requirement 1 | Requirement 2 |
|-------------------|--|-----|--|--|---|
| | AS | A2 | Total | Achieve overall grade A (minimum 80% of total UMS) | Achieve minimum 90% of total UMS for A2 units |
| 4-unit award | 160 | 240 | 400 | 320+ out of 400 UMS | 216+ out of 240 UMS |
| | Art & Design Business Studies Digital Technology Economics Environmental Technology Further Mathematics Government & Politics Mathematics | | Moving Image Arts Nutrition & Food Science Performing Arts Religious Studies Software Systems Development Sports Science & the Active Leisure Industry Technology & Design | | |

| A Level Structure | Available Uniform Marks† | | | Requirement 1 | Requirement 2 |
|-------------------|--------------------------|-----|-------|--|---|
| | AS | A2 | Total | Achieve overall grade A (minimum 80% of total UMS) | Achieve minimum 90% of total UMS for A2 units |
| 5-unit award | 160 | 240 | 400 | 320+ out of 400 UMS | 216+ out of 240 UMS |
| | English Literature | | | | |

| A Level Structure | Available Uniform Marks† | | | Requirement 1 | Requirement 2 |
|-------------------|--------------------------|--------------------|-------|--|---|
| | AS | A2 | Total | Achieve overall grade A (minimum 80% of total UMS) | Achieve minimum 90% of total UMS for A2 units |
| 6-unit award | 200 | 300 | 500 | 400+ out of 500 UMS | 270+ out of 300 UMS |
| | French German | Geography Irish | | Spanish | |

| A Level Structure | Available Uniform Marks† | | | Requirement 1 | Requirement 2 |
|-------------------|--|-----|-------|--|---|
| | AS | A2 | Total | Achieve overall grade A (minimum 80% of total UMS) | Achieve minimum 90% of total UMS for A2 units |
| 6-unit award | 240 | 360 | 600 | 480+ out of 600 UMS | 324+ out of 360 UMS |
| | Biology Chemistry Health & Social Care (Single Award) Life & Health Sciences (Single Award) | | | Music Physics Professional Business Services | |

Table 2: Awarding A*A* and A*A across CCEA's Double Award A level qualifications

| A Level Structure | Available Uniform Marks† | | | Requirement 1 | Requirement 2 |
|-------------------|---------------------------------------|-----|-------|--|--|
| | AS | A2 | Total | Achieve overall grade A (minimum 80% of total UMS) | Achieve minimum 90% of total UMS for A2 units |
| 12-unit award | 480 | 720 | 1200 | 960+ out of 1200 UMS | A*A* awarded 90% UMS across all six A2 units 648+ out of 720 UMS |
| | | | | | A*A awarded 90% UMS in three best A2 units 324+ out of 360 UMS |
| | Health & Social Care (Double Award)†† | | | Life & Health Sciences (Double Award) | |

† AS contributes 40% and A2 contributes 60% of the total uniform marks available for A level.

†† Health & Social Care Double Award grade A*A:

The award of grade A*A will be based on the student's best **externally assessed unit** (written exam) and their best two other A2 units.

- A*A with *one externally assessed unit* and *two internally assessed units*: 324+ out of 360 UMS
- A*A with *two externally assessed units* and *one internally assessed unit*: 405+ out of 450 UMS

Additional Support

If you require any additional support, or have any further queries, please email **CCEA Standards – Technical Support**: standards@ccea.org.uk

Appendix

Worked examples illustrating A* requirements being applied

1. Applying both requirements to award A*

Both students are entered for a 6-unit A level with 600 maximum uniform marks, with AS units contributing **40%** (240 uniform marks) and A2 units contributing **60%** (360 uniform marks) of the full A level.

| Student A | | |
|----------------------|----------|--------------|
| Level | Unit | UMS Achieved |
| AS | 1 | 85 |
| AS | 2 | 80 |
| AS | 3 | 65 |
| A2 | 1 | 130 |
| A2 | 2 | 120 |
| A2 | 3 | 60 |
| Total UMS | | 540 |
| Grade Awarded | | A |

| Student B | | |
|----------------------|----------|--------------|
| Level | Unit | UMS Achieved |
| AS | 1 | 80 |
| AS | 2 | 90 |
| AS | 3 | 60 |
| A2 | 1 | 140 |
| A2 | 2 | 130 |
| A2 | 3 | 65 |
| Total UMS | | 565 |
| Grade Awarded | | A* |

Both students have satisfied the **1st requirement** to be awarded A*, as they have achieved grade A on their full A level qualification (480+ out of 600 UMS).

The **2nd requirement**, 90% aggregation of their A2 units, determines if they are awarded grade A*:

Student A: $130 + 120 + 60 = 310$ out of $360 = 86.1\%$

Student B: $140 + 130 + 65 = 335$ out of $360 = 93.1\%$

Student A achieved an aggregation of **86.1%** across their A2 units, which does not meet the 2nd requirement to be awarded grade A*, and is therefore awarded a final grade A.

Student B achieved an aggregation of **93.1%** across their A2 units and is therefore awarded a final grade A*.

2. Student awarded grade A* with a lower uniform mark total than student awarded grade A

The requirements to be awarded grade A* can result in students being awarded grade A* who have scored a lower uniform mark total than students awarded grade A.

Both students are entered for a 4-unit A level with 400 maximum uniform marks, with AS units contributing **40%** (160 uniform marks) and A2 units contributing **60%** (240 uniform marks) of the full A level.

| Student A | | |
|---------------|------|--------------|
| Level | Unit | UMS Achieved |
| AS | 1 | 80 |
| AS | 2 | 80 |
| A2 | 1 | 110 |
| A2 | 2 | 100 |
| Total UMS | | 370 |
| Grade Awarded | | A |

| Student B | | |
|---------------|------|--------------|
| Level | Unit | UMS Achieved |
| AS | 1 | 70 |
| AS | 2 | 60 |
| A2 | 1 | 100 |
| A2 | 2 | 116 |
| Total UMS | | 346 |
| Grade Awarded | | A* |

Both students have satisfied the **1st requirement** to be awarded A*, as they have achieved grade A on their full A level qualification (320+ out of 400 UMS).

The **2nd requirement**, 90% aggregation of their A2 units, determines if they are awarded grade A*:

Student A: $110 + 100 = 210$ out of $240 = 87.5\%$

Student B: $100 + 116 = 216$ out of $240 = 90.0\%$

Student A achieved an aggregation of **87.5%** across their A2 units, which does not meet the 2nd requirement to be awarded grade A*, and is therefore awarded a final grade A.

Student B achieved an aggregation of **90.0%** across their A2 units and is therefore awarded a final grade A*.

Student A, despite scoring an additional 24 uniform marks than **Student B**, receives a final grade A, as the aggregation of A2 units is less than 90% of the uniform marks available.

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