



# Revised CCEA Guidance Summer 2018

**GCSE**

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## Guidance for Teachers and Examination Officers

For use with revised GCSE Specifications  
*First Teaching - September 2017*

[First Units Available Summer 2018](#)

and first GCSE Subject Cash-in/Certification  
*Summer 2019*



## SECTION 1

### CHANGES TO EXISTING GRADING STRUCTURE

There are two major changes to the grading structure from that used previously for legacy GCSEs:

- Introduction of a new C\* grade – this has been introduced to align with the level of achievement consistent with grade 5 on the GCSE 9-1 grading model. The new C\* grade will be awarded as a subject grade and also as a notional unit grade (see table 1 below). In double awards there will be grades BC\*, C\*C\* and C\*C available as subject grades (see table 2 below);
- Re-alignment of the A\* grade to reflect the level of achievement consistent with the grade 9 on the 9-1 grade scale. Grade A\* will be awarded at subject level only and will no longer be issued as a notional grade at unit level (see Table 1). In double award specifications A\*A\* and A\*/A grades will be awarded at subject level only (see Table 2).

**Table 1**  
**Revised Grading Structure - GCSE**

<b>GCSE GRADES AVAILABLE</b> <b>(UPPERCASE IS A FINAL GRADE, lower case a notional unit grade)</b>			
<b>SUBJECT LEVEL</b> <b>(Cash-in)</b>	<b>Un-tiered</b> <b>Unit</b>	<b>Higher Tier</b> <b>Unit</b>	<b>Foundation Tier</b> <b>Unit</b>
<b>A*</b>			
<b>A</b>	a	a	
<b>B</b>	b	b	
<b>C*</b>	c*	c*	c*
<b>C</b>	c	c	c
<b>D</b>	d	d	d
<b>E</b>	e	Allowable e	e
<b>F</b>	f		f
<b>G</b>	g		g

**Table 2**  
**Revised Grading Structure - Double Award GCSEs**

<b>GCSE DOUBLE AWARD GRADES AVAILABLE</b> (UPPERCASE IS A FINAL GRADE, lower case a notional unit grade)			
<b>SUBJECT LEVEL (Cash-in)</b>	<b>Un-tiered Unit</b>	<b>Higher Tier Unit</b>	<b>Foundation Tier Unit</b>
<b>A*A*</b>			
<b>A*/A</b>			
<b>AA</b>	a	a	
<b>A/B</b>			
<b>BB</b>	b	b	
<b>B/C*</b>			
<b>C*C*</b>	c*	c*	c*
<b>C*/C</b>			
<b>CC</b>	c	c	c
<b>C/D</b>			
<b>DD</b>	d	d	d
<b>D/E</b>			
<b>EE</b>	e	Allowable e	e
<b>E/F</b>			
<b>FF</b>	f		f
<b>F/G</b>			
<b>GG</b>	g		g

## SECTION 2

### UNITISED REVISED GCSEs

- The specifications consist of units which contribute to an overall subject cash-in.
- Learners must sit a valid combination of the units which contribute to the cash-in.
- Learners must be entered for each unit individually.
- Learners may take different units at different tiers of entry.
- Learners can complete units in one series/year, or across a number of series/years subject to the rules outlined below.
- Learners must also be entered for cash-in, on completion of all units, to achieve a certified subject grade.

### USE OF UNIFORM MARK SCALES

In unitised GCSEs we use [Uniform Mark Scales](#) (UMS) to aggregate marks from individual assessment units. After the grade boundaries for a question paper or controlled assessment are decided, the marks (also referred to as ‘raw’ marks) are converted to a uniform mark. The number of uniform marks for each unit depends on its weighting and on the maximum uniform mark for the qualification as a whole. Using a uniform mark scale ensures that work representing the same level of achievement, produced in different examination series, ends up with the same uniform mark to contribute to the final GCSE result.

#### 2a TERMINAL REQUIREMENT

- At least 40% of the assessment must be taken in the examination series in which the qualification is certificated.
- The final grade will include the unit results which satisfy this terminal requirement.
- To meet the terminal requirement learners must complete their course by taking unit(s) that make up at least 40% of the weighting for the whole qualification. The results for the unit(s) that satisfy this 40% terminal requirement **MUST** count (i.e. they will be used to calculate the overall subject grade), even if a better score for an earlier attempt at one or more of these units exists.

#### 2b RE-SIT RULES

- Learners may re-sit a unit **ONCE** before cash-in/certification.
- The better result for the two attempts at a unit counts, as long as the 40% terminal requirement is satisfied, ie if a unit(s) is/are being used to meet the terminal requirement the UMS from the current series will be used to calculate the grade, even if a better score for an earlier attempt exists.
- Options within an assessment unit and optional units are treated as separate units with regard to re-sits.
- A tiered unit or tiered option may be re-sat once at either tier (it is not permissible to make two attempts at each tier of a tiered unit).

## **2c UNITS AVAILABLE AT FOUNDATION AND HIGHER TIERS**

- Foundation Tier targets notional unit grades c\*-g. In entering at foundation tier a learner cannot achieve a higher uniform mark than a top notional c\* grade on that unit. The number of uniform marks they can access is capped at 1 below the total required for a notional grade b.
- Higher Tier targets notional unit grades a - d (with an allowable notional grade e). In entering at higher tier a learner can access the full range of uniform marks available for the unit.
- Learners can take different units at different tiers within a subject.
- Learners can re-sit a unit at a different tier (once only).

## **2d RE-TAKING A QUALIFICATION AFTER CASH-IN/CERTIFICATION**

- A qualification may be taken more than once – either by re-sitting all the units, or by re-sitting some units and re-using previous results for others, subject to the terminal requirement being satisfied.
- When a qualification is re-taken, a learner may have up to two further attempts at each unit. However, only the better of the last two results will count towards the final grade; or the last attempt if this is being used to satisfy the terminal requirement.

## **2e DECLINING AN AWARD, TRANSFER AND ABSENCE**

- Learners cannot decline certification of GCSE awards after the results have been published.
- Learners cannot transfer individual GCSE Uniform Mark Scores from one awarding body to another. Additionally, it is not permissible for learners to transfer a cashed-in award, e.g. a GCSE Short Course award, from one awarding body to another. Units from a GCSE Short Course award cannot be transferred from one awarding body to another in order to enable the learner to 'top up' units for a Full Course award.
- It is the result of, not the entry for, an assessment unit that counts. A learner who enters for a unit but is absent from the examination has not used up one of his/her two possible attempts. However, in order to generate a subject level grade, absence from an assessment unit will be treated as a result of zero marks for that unit.

## SECTION 3

### **REVISED GCSE SHORT COURSE (Religious Studies only – no other Short Courses offered)**

- A Short Course is worth half a full GCSE.
- Grades available are the same as a full course GCSE (see Table 1 above).
- Learners may complete the Short Course after one year, then ‘top up’ to complete the full GCSE.
- The results of units used for a Short Course award remain available for use towards a Full Course award.
- Following certification, each unit may be re-taken once or twice. For example, a unit which had been taken twice prior to the cash-in/certification of a Short Course award could then be re-taken on one or two further occasions prior to certification of a Full Course award. However, only the better of the last two results will count towards the GCSE Full Course final grade; or the last result if it is used to meet the terminal requirement.
- A learner must satisfy the terminal requirement for a Short Course award. \*\*
- An awarding body will not make an automatic compensatory award to a learner who is ‘Unclassified’ for a Full Course, but has unit results which would gain a grade for a Short Course award. However, the learner will be allowed to make a late subject award claim for the Short Course award within a specified period after the publication of results.

\*\*NOTE: The first cash-in/certification of GCSE Religious Studies (Short Course) will be summer 2019. For SUMMER 2019 SERIES ONLY the terminal rule will not be applied for Short Course and candidates may cash-in/certify a unit result achieved in summer 2018 when units are available but no cash-in/certification offered

## SECTION 4

### **SHELF LIFE OF UNIT RESULTS**

- Results for individual assessment units remain available to count towards a GCSE cash-in/certificate until we withdraw the specification.

## SECTION 5

### **LINEAR REVISED GCSEs**

- All assessments are taken at the end of the course, therefore, first availability is summer 2019 when all components will be offered and cash-in/certification possible.
- Linear GCSEs use the same subject level grading structure as revised GCSE unitised (see Table 1 above).
- A linear qualification, as a whole, may be re-taken after cash-in/certification. Usually in linear specifications controlled assessment marks may be carried forward, and only written papers re-sat, if the learner is content with controlled assessment mark(s) – please see individual linear specifications for details.



## Worked Examples Illustrating Key GCSE Rules

## 1 TERMINAL REQUIREMENT

- At least 40% of the assessment must be taken in the examination series in which the qualification is certificated.
- The final grade will include the unit results which satisfy this terminal requirement.
- To meet the terminal requirement learners must complete their course by taking unit(s) that make up at least 40% of the weighting for the whole qualification. The results for the unit(s) that satisfy this 40% terminal requirement **MUST** count (i.e. they will be used to calculate the overall subject grade), even if a better score for an earlier attempt at one or more of these units exists.

A learner begins a 4 unit GCSE in September 2017, with a maximum uniform mark of 400, and certifies in summer 2019 and achieves the following uniform mark scores (ums):

	<b>Unit 1</b> (35% weighting)	<b>Unit 2</b> (30% weighting)	<b>Unit 3</b> (20% weighting)	<b>Unit 4</b> (15% weighting)
<b>Summer 2018</b>	115 ums	95 ums		
<b>Summer 2019</b>	111 ums	86 ums	64 ums	49 ums

If we used the highest uniform mark scores for each unit this would give a total uniform mark of 323 which would be an overall subject level Grade A (Grade A at subject level is 320 or above).

	<b>Unit 1</b> (35% weighting)	<b>Unit 2</b> (30% weighting)	<b>Unit 3</b> (20% weighting)	<b>Unit 4</b> (15% weighting)	<b>Total UMS &amp; Subject Grade</b>
<b>Summer 2018</b>	<b>115 ums</b>	<b>95 ums</b>			
<b>Summer 2019</b>	<del>111 ums</del>	<del>86 ums</del>	<b>64 ums</b>	<b>49 ums</b>	<b>323 Grade A</b>

**However the learner would not meet the 40% Terminal Requirement as only results from Units 3 and 4 would be from the series in which they have requested certification and the combined weighting of these two units is 35%.**

To meet the terminal requirement in this scenario we would have to use either the uniform mark for Unit 1 or Unit 2 from summer 2019 even though there is a higher uniform mark for both from a previous series. In this example the learner would be graded as shown below:

	<b>Unit 1</b> (35% weighting)	<b>Unit 2</b> (30% weighting)	<b>Unit 3</b> (20% weighting)	<b>Unit 4</b> (15% weighting)	<b>Total UMS &amp; Subject Grade</b>
<b>Summer 2018</b>	<del>115 ums</del>	<b>95 ums</b>			
<b>Summer 2019</b>	<b>111 ums</b>	<del>86 ums</del>	<b>64 ums</b>	<b>49 ums</b>	<b>319 Grade B</b>

## 2 RE-SIT RULES

- Learners may re-sit a unit ONCE before cash-in/certification. The better result for the two attempts at a unit counts, as long as the 40% terminal requirement is satisfied, ie if a unit(s) is/ are being used to meet the terminal requirement the UMS from the current series will be used to calculate the grade, even if a better score for an earlier attempt exists.

Examples 1a and 1b below show how this works in practice.

### Example 1a

In this case units 3 and 4 have a combined weighting of 60% and have been taken in the series in which certification is being requested and so this meets the terminal requirement. This means we can select the best of the two attempts at Units 1 and 2.

	Unit 1 (20% weighting)	Unit 2 (20% weighting)	Unit 3 (30% weighting)	Unit 4 (30% weighting)	Total UMS & Subject Grade
Summer 2018	115 ums	95 ums			
Summer 2019	<del>111 ums</del>	<del>86 ums</del>	64 ums	49 ums	323 Grade A

### Example 1b

In this scenario the learner has had the one permissible re-sit of both Units 1 and 2. They have re-sat both Unit 3 and Unit 4 in summer 2020. Therefore with this entry profile the only way they can meet the terminal rule is in using the summer 2020 results for both units 3 and 4 even though they have higher uniform marks for these units in a previous series.

	Unit 1 (20% weighting)	Unit 2 (20% weighting)	Unit 3 (30% weighting)	Unit 4 (30% weighting)	Total UMS & Subject Grade
Summer 2018	56 ums - best of 2 attempts	<del>53 ums</del>			
Summer 2019	<del>50 ums</del>	56 ums - best of 2 attempts	<del>76 ums</del>	<del>80 ums</del>	
Summer 2020			75 ums - must use to meet terminal rule even with higher score in 2019	74 ums - must use to meet terminal rule even with higher score in 2019	261 Grade C

- Learners can re-sit a unit at a different tier (once only)

	Unit 1 Foundation Tier	Unit 1 Higher Tier
Summer 2018	First attempt	
Summer 2019	Could re-sit at foundation tier	Could enter at higher tier - this would count as a re-sit
Summer 2020	Any entry in this series at foundation or higher tier counts as a third attempt so Summer 2018 result cannot be considered in aggregation – only the 2 most recent attempts	

If the learner still wishes to improve their uniform mark for either unit 1 or unit 2, they may enter these units again after cash-in and have up to 2 further attempts at each, however only the two most recent results for these units will be considered when aggregating uniform mark totals to award a subject grade. Example 2 shows this scenario.

**Example 2**

	<b>Unit 1</b> (20% weighting)	<b>Unit 2</b> (20% weighting)	<b>Unit 3</b> (30% weighting)	<b>Unit 4</b> (30% weighting)	<b>Total UMS &amp; Subject Grade</b>
<b>Summer 2018</b>	<del>56</del> ums - cannot be considered only 2 most recent attempts can	<del>56</del> ums - cannot be considered only 2 most recent attempts can			
<b>Summer 2019</b>	<del>50</del> ums	<del>56</del> ums	<b>76 ums</b>	<b>80 ums</b>	
<b>Summer 2020</b>	<b>49 ums - must use to meet terminal rule even with higher score in 2019</b>	<b>64 ums - must use to meet terminal rule</b>			<b>269 Grade C</b>



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