

Produced on behalf of: AQA, CCEA, Edexcel, OCR and WJEC

Notice to Centres

Withdrawal of GCSE specifications

Assessment arrangements during the transition from current (legacy) specifications to new specifications

The JCO awarding bodies wish to remind GCSE centres of the assessment arrangements during the transition from current (legacy) GCSE specifications to new specifications. Individual awarding bodies will notify centres of the particular arrangements for their own specifications. The following table lists the assessment opportunities for the period covering the withdrawal of the current (legacy) GCSE specifications and the phasing in of the newly accredited specifications.

GCSE qualifications in subjects other than English, English Language, English Literature, Gaeilge, Welsh First Language, Welsh Second Language, Welsh Literature, ICT, Mathematics and Sciences:

Note: This table also applies to GCSE qualifications in Astronomy, Electronics, Environmental Sciences, Geology and Human Health and Physiology.

Examination series	Current (legacy) specifications	New specifications
January 2011	Externally assessed units for some specifications offered. No internally assessed units offered. Please check individual awarding body websites. <i>Certification of those specifications with units that are offered will be possible.</i>	Those units that are shown in the specification as being available in this series will be offered. <i>Certification of new short course specifications where available.</i>
June 2011	No examinations offered. <i>No certification possible.</i>	All units and linear examinations available. <i>Certification of full and short course specifications where available.</i>
January 2012	No examinations offered. <i>No certification possible.</i>	Those units that are shown in the specification as being available in this series will be offered. <i>Certification of full and short course specifications where available.</i>
June 2012	No examinations offered. <i>No certification possible.</i>	All units and linear examinations available. <i>Certification of full and short course specifications where available.</i>

GCSE qualifications in English, English Language, English Literature, Gaeilge, Welsh First Language, Welsh Second Language, Welsh Literature, ICT and Mathematics:

Examination series	Current (legacy) specifications	New specifications
November 2010	Those units and terminal examinations that are normally offered will be available. <i>Certification of specifications with terminal examinations possible.</i>	Those units that are shown in the specifications as being available in this series will be offered <i>No certification possible.</i>
January 2011	Externally assessed units for some specifications offered. Please check individual awarding body websites. <i>Certification of those specifications with units that are offered will be possible.</i>	Those units that are shown in the specification as being available in this series will be offered. <i>No certification possible.</i>
March 2011	Only those units that are normally offered will be available. <i>No certification possible.</i>	Those units that are shown in the specifications as being available in this series will be offered <i>No certification possible.</i>
June 2011	All units and terminal examinations available <i>Certification of all specifications possible.</i>	Those units that are shown in the specification as being available in this series will be offered. <i>Certification of short course specifications where available.</i>
November 2011	Terminal examinations that are normally offered will be available. <i>Certification of specifications with terminal examinations possible.</i>	Those units that are shown in the specifications as being available in this series will be offered <i>No certification possible.</i>
January 2012	Externally assessed units for some specifications offered. Please check individual awarding body websites. <i>Certification of those specifications with units that are offered will be possible.</i>	Those units that are shown in the specification as being available in this series will be offered. <i>Certification of short course specifications where available.</i>
March 2012	External assessments for some specifications offered. Please check individual awarding body websites. <i>Certification of those specifications with assessments that are offered will be possible.</i>	Those units that are shown in the specifications as being available in this series will be offered <i>No certification possible.</i>
June 2012	No examinations offered. <i>No certification possible.</i>	All units available <i>Certification of all specifications possible.</i>

GCSE qualifications in Science:

Only the current legacy specifications will be offered in the year up to June 2011.

Taking GCSE Sciences over three years

If you offer GCSE Sciences over three years there are a few things you'll need to check.

While GCSEs are usually taken over two years they can be taken over three. Where this is the case, centres must:

- check the accreditation review date to ensure students are entered for the right specification
- confirm assessment arrangements and timelines with awarding bodies during transition to new specifications.

It is important to remember that awarding bodies cannot transfer credit from current specifications to new ones, and units from current and new specifications cannot be combined to make a GCSE qualification.

The accreditation review date of current GCSEs in science is August 2012. Centres planning to offer GCSEs in science over three years (September 2010 to June 2013) should use the key stage 4 programme of study to prepare schemes of work. New draft specifications are available on awarding body websites, and, though they are subject to change, they could help planning

New specifications will be accredited in autumn 2010 for centres to plan for first teaching from September 2011 for first award in June 2012 for Science and Science: Single Award¹ or June 2013 for Additional Science, Additional Applied Science, Science: Double Award¹, Biology, Chemistry, Physics and Environmental and Land-based Science. Assessments for these new specifications will not be available until late 2011 at the earliest.

A further notice will be published in September 2011 to set out the assessment opportunities as the legacy specifications are withdrawn and the new specifications introduced.

¹ Specifications with this title are for use in Northern Ireland only.