

OCR Network Update



OCR News

EOU – Exams Officers’ Update

The next edition of the EOU is out in January. There’s lots of news and views from around the education sector. Sign up or view previous editions in the Exams Officers’ area of the OCR website. <http://www.ocr.org.uk/ocr-for/exams-officers/exams-officer-update/>

Packaging improvements for the 14 – 19 January 2014 series

Following feedback from centres on the packaging of question papers, we are pleased to let you know that we piloted packing in **exam date order** for the January 2014 series. The trial is designed to save you time and enable you to find exactly what you need, when you need it. We’re really keen to know what you think – please let us know by emailing cast@ocr.org.uk. The more feedback we receive the better.

GCSE English and English Language Speaking and Listening

From June 2014, the marks for **Speaking and Listening** will no longer contribute to the overall grade for GCSE English and GCSE English Language, although they remain mandatory units. To facilitate this change, OCR has updated some of the unit entry codes for the Speaking and Listening and Spoken Language units. The Basedata and the Admin Guide will be updated to reflect this and we will continue to communicate any further changes with you.

Cambridge Technicals advisory visits

If you’re an OCR centre delivering **Cambridge Technicals**, you can now take advantage of advisory visits. These visits are available to support your delivery of the qualifications and cover any subject within the suite at all levels. The visits should take place **before your first moderation visit** and are intended to support you with the general delivery of Cambridge Technicals, including how to make entries, effective use of resources, general administration and an explanation of the qualification’s assessment methodology. **No charge** will be made for this support and it is available to all centres delivering our Cambridge Technical qualifications. Centres can have **one visit a year** for each subject that they deliver. The person making the visit will be an expert member of staff from OCR with an in-depth knowledge of the Cambridge Technicals that you are delivering. To find out more: <http://www.ocr.org.uk/qualifications/by-type/technicals-related/free-advisory-visits/> (This is in addition to the two moderation visits available per academic year).

Customer contact centre

Standard opening times - For support and information on our products and services please send us an email, or call between 8.00am and 5.30pm Monday to Friday. You can also contact our national offices for advice and support.

General qualifications

*For qualifications for people aged 14 to 19 years of age (general) including GCSE, GCE and Asset Languages, please contact:
Email: general.qualifications@ocr.org.uk
Tel: 01223 553998 Fax: 01223 552627*

Vocational qualifications

*For skills and employment qualifications (vocational) including Cambridge Nationals, NVQs, Key Skills, Basic Skills and CLAiT, please contact:
Email: vocational.qualifications@ocr.org.uk
Tel: 02476 851509 Fax: 02476 421944*

Help with the Admin

Cambridge Nationals

Cambridge Nationals have a different entry pattern to the expiring OCR Nationals. This seems to have caught a few centres out and we're doing our best to resolve this. Unlike for OCR Nationals, you need to make entries for each individual unit. You only submit a certification entry when the candidate is entering for their final units – similar to the GCSE unitised entry method. Many centres send their entries for Cambridge Nationals very close to the deadline. We don't want you to incur late fees, which is why we often chase centres for entries before the deadline. To find out more: <http://www.ocr.org.uk/Images/75972-cambridge-nationals-administration-overview.pdf>
The **Customer Support Team** offer **free and local** training on all aspect of the administration of OCR qualifications. <http://www.ocr.org.uk/ocr-for/exams-officers/training/>

Performance Tables

Following the government's announcement that only the **results of a candidate's first entry** at GCSE will count towards the school's performance tables, we have been in discussions with the DfE about the implications for other qualifications. For Cambridge Nationals and other non-linear qualifications that contribute towards the performance tables, an entry will be taken as the first time that a certification entry is made for a particular qualification. To determine the entry date for a Cambridge National qualification, we will set a date each year that will be used in the event that two qualifications that discount against each other are reported for a single student. This date will only be used for the purpose of performance table reporting and will not affect the administrative dates for entries. For the full statement, and answers to frequently asked questions from centres, please visit the OCR website.
<http://www.ocr.org.uk/qualifications/by-type/nationals-related/key-stage-4-performance-tables/>

Carrying forward marks for GCSEs

Please be aware that for the new GCSE qualifications introduced from **June 2014 onwards**, candidates have the option to carry forward the result of a controlled assessment unit from a previous series. This **will not happen automatically** – you will need to make an entry for the unit you wish to carry forward using the carry forward option code. These codes are provided in the Entry Codes section of the 14–19 Admin Guide. You can also read our FAQs about carrying forward marks.
<http://www.ocr.org.uk/qualifications/gcse-and-a-level-reform/gcse-reform/changes-from-2012/>

Summer Basedata

The 6A14 summer Basedata was released without the English and English Language qualifications. This was done pending OfQual issuing OCR with QAN codes for the S&L units. In response to customer feedback; we released the Basedata in January to allow centres to plan for their English entries without the QAN numbers for the S&L units. We have had it confirmed that this will have no impact on awarding, reporting or funding. Once OfQual have confirmed the QANs for all units we will issue revised Basedata accordingly and notify you appropriately. <http://www.ocr.org.uk/ocr-for/exams-officers/basedata/>

Focus on...Candidate numbers

Using the right numbers for the right qualifications is essential for the smooth running of examinations and post-results services. However, we know that it can be difficult to keep on top of all of the numbers candidates have. Now that you'll soon be thinking about making entries for the June 2014 series, here is a helpful summary of the different numbers and why each of them are important.

Type	No. of digits/ characters	Qualifications	How do centres get the number?	Why is it important?
Candidate number	4	Mandatory for general qualifications. Optional for vocational qualifications.	Allocated by centres, usually at the time the candidate takes their first exam.	Help centres to keep track of candidates.
OCR candidate number	8	Mandatory for Cambridge Awards, Cambridge Technicals, Functional Skills, OCR Nationals and vocational qualifications. Not used for general qualifications.	Allocated by OCR.	Allows a candidate's units to be linked together when claiming for multiple units or full awards.
Unique candidate identifier (UCI)	13	Mandatory for all general qualifications. Optional for vocational qualifications.	Examination administration software packages will usually have the facility to generate UCIs. Please check with your software provider.	Used mainly to link a candidate's unit results across series for all of their entries, so that they can be certificated. This is why it is essential that a candidate moving from one centre to another retains the same UCI. Although optional for OCR Nationals and Cambridge Technicals, the UCI must accompany a candidate's entry if you wish to receive the results for these qualifications via A2C.
Unique learner number (ULN)	10	The ULN should be provided for all qualification entries.	Centres register their candidates at the age of 14 with the Learning Records Service (LRS) to set up a Learner Record for them, at which point the LRS will give them a ULN.	OCR, along with other awarding bodies, uses ULNs to upload candidate's results to the LRS. The LRS then add this achievement information to a Personal Learning Record (PLR) for each candidate, capturing all of their academic and vocational achievement data in one place. If a candidate moves to a new centre they must take their ULN with them for this to happen. Whenever you enter a new candidate, or let us know of a change of details, we verify this with the LRS using the ULN. The ULN and the details of the candidate must match up with the details provided in the entry/amend files you have sent to OCR. The LRS have a helpful guide to help you to get familiar with ULNs.

What's happening in Schools and VI form?



New GCSEs in English and maths confirmed

OfQual and the Department for Education (DfE) have set out the key features of new GCSEs in English literature, English language and maths. The new GCSEs will be introduced in England for first teaching from September 2015 with new GCSEs in other subjects to follow in 2016.

Key features of the new GCSE design include:

- A new grading scale that uses the numbers 1–9 to identify levels of performance, (with 9 being the top level). Where performance is below the minimum required to pass a GCSE, students will get a U.
- Tiering used only for subjects 'where untiered papers will not allow students at the lower end of the ability range to demonstrate their knowledge and skills, or will not stretch the most able'. English literature and English language will be

untiered. Maths will be tiered with an 'improved overlapping tiers model', with a foundation tier covering grades 1-5 and a higher tier covering grades 4–9.

- Linear GCSEs, with assessment to be taken at the end of the course in the summer. Re-sit opportunities in November for English language and maths only.
- Assessment by external exam only, except where non exam assessment is the only way to provide valid assessment of the skills required. Maths, English literature and English language to be externally assessed. English language to have a speaking assessment that will be reported separately.
- The first assessment of new two-year GCSE courses that start in September 2015 will be in June 2017.
- New GCSEs in the sciences, history and geography, as well as languages, are scheduled for first teaching in September 2016 with first assessment in 2018. The content for these subjects is due to be published in 2014.

The content of new GCSEs announced by the DfE features:

- A much larger, more 'challenging' GCSE in maths with more emphasis on solving problems which require multi-step solutions. They will be new topics such as ratio and proportions. Students will be expected to learn key mathematical formulae by heart.
- Students of the new GCSE in English language will be expected to read 'a wide range of texts' (there will be no set texts). There will be greater emphasis on accurate use of spelling, punctuation and grammar.
- English literature, which is no longer compulsory, focuses on four areas of 'classic literature'. Unseen texts will be a new requirement.

OCR reform pages: <http://www.ocr.org.uk/qualifications/gcse-and-a-level-reform/gcse-reform/>

OfQual news (regulations): <http://ofqual.gov.uk/news/design-details-of-new-gcses-in-england/>

DfE news (content): <https://www.gov.uk/government/speeches/reformed-gcses-in-english-and-mathematics>



Proposals for A level coursework and new AS levels

The proposals include subject-by-subject arrangements that put in place a better balance between exam and non-exam assessment, or coursework, for the 14 subjects being revised ready for first teaching in 2015. They also set out details of the new AS qualification, which the Government has decided will be a stand-alone qualification, separate from the A level. However, exam boards will be able to design the AS so that it can be taught alongside the first year of an A level course. OfQual is proposing that A levels only include non-exam assessment in subjects where it is necessary to assess the required skills. Otherwise assessment will be by exam only. Where there is non-exam assessment, OfQual proposes the percentage of marks allocated to it will be fixed. This will provide a much clearer rationale for the role of non-exam assessment in each subject. It is also proposed that where non exam assessment is used, it should be designed in such a way that is manageable for schools while providing valid assessment, and that can reduce the risks of malpractice.

The subject-by-subject proposals include:

- Re-introduction of non-exam assessment of fieldwork in geography
- Retention of 100 per cent non exam assessment for art and design
- English literature, English language, history, geography and computer science to be 80 per cent exam and 20 per cent non exam.

For biology, chemistry and physics:

- Practical skills to be assessed and the results reported separately. The results will not count towards grades. Understanding of experimental methods will be assessed in exams.

What's happening to AS?

AS Levels are currently proposed to be redeveloped as a stand-alone qualification.

- Unlike current AS Levels, new AS Level qualifications for first teaching in September 2015 will not contribute towards an A Level grade.
- The new AS qualifications will remain broadly at their current standard.
- In some subjects, it may be appropriate for the AS to be designed to be co-taught with the first year of the A Level.
- The first assessment of the new AS Levels is planned for June 2016.

Our consultation with teachers has highlighted the range of concerns teachers have about the proposed changes to A Levels, including whether AS and A Level will be co-teachable. We will continue to work with teachers and our other stakeholders to learn how best we can support you through this challenging period of reform.

OCR reform pages: <http://www.ocr.org.uk/qualifications/gcse-and-a-level-reform/a-level-reform/>

OCR guide to reforms: <http://www.ocr.org.uk/qualifications/gcse-and-a-level-reform/a-level-reform/guide-to-the-a-level-changes/>

OfQual news: <http://ofqual.gov.uk/news/ofqual-sets-out-proposals-for-a-level-coursework-and-new-as-levels/>



Cambridge Nationals

Engineering: OCR is pleased to announce the launch of a new suite of **engineering qualifications** during a week designed to inspire more young people to become engineers. The suite of four GCSE-sized qualifications can be studied separately or in combination and will be available for first teaching from September 2014. <http://www.ocr.org.uk/qualifications/by-type/cambridge-nationals/>

Reforming the accountability system for secondary schools

The DfE recently announced changes to the **schools' accountability measures**. In summary; the DfE will require all schools to publish core information on their website, in a standard format. From now on, there will be 4 key measures which must be published:

- Pupils' progress across 8 subjects. So, a parent will see whether pupils at a school typically achieve 1 grade more than expected, or 1 grade less
 - The average grade a pupil achieves in these same 'best 8' subjects. This will show, for example, that pupils in a particular school average a high B grade or a low D grade in their GCSEs
 - The percentage of pupils achieving a C grade in English and maths
 - The proportion of pupils gaining the EBacc, which will continue in its current form
- They will also look at including a destination measure to show the percentage of pupils who move on to further study or employment - including further training.



Department
for Education

Details and links to the final consultation document here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/speeches/reforming-the-accountability-system-for-secondary-schools>

The DfE have released the list of qualifications that will count in the 2016 performance measures (16th December 2013).

DfE list of vocational qualifications for 14 – 19 year olds: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/vocational-qualifications-for-14-to-19-year-olds>

Emergency examination arrangements



Sudden events, such as heavy snow, transport disruption, or power cuts, can significantly disrupt the examinations process. It is important to be as prepared as possible for the unexpected. To reduce the impact of any disruption, a **Joint Contingency Plan** has been developed to ensure consistency of response in the case of unexpected events. This can be downloaded from the OfQual website. In the event of major disruption, the JCQ and OCR websites will also provide specific information. Your centre should already have plans in place for examinations as part of your general emergency planning and it is good practice to provide refresher training in emergency procedures for examinations on a regular basis. http://ofqual.gov.uk/ofdoc_categories/about-us/information/

What's happening in FE?



New dedicated hub

OCR has a new dedicated **Vocational Education and Skills** hub page.

Find out more at

<http://www.ocr.org.uk/qualifications/by-type/vocational-education-and-skills/16-to-19-vocational-qualifications-reform/> or simply click on 'Vocational Skills' on the top menu of the www.ocr.org.uk website.

You can find everything you need from the admin to the funding for our qualifications' suite.

Functional Skills



Paper-based, on-demand assessment - Live for entries. Instead of waiting for a timetabled assessment window, you'll be able to simply order the paper-based examinations whenever you want. You'll receive papers five working days after you've placed your order and we'll provide assessment all year round (excluding Christmas holidays) rather than just monthly. Results turnaround time has also been decreased, with confirmed results available in as little as 15 days.

<http://www.ocr.org.uk/qualifications/by-type/functional-skills/>

On screen, on demand tests for Level 1 and 2 English and maths are also available and continue as normal.

The updated *Functional Skills Admin Guide* is available, along with OCR instructions for conducting Functional Skills and Cambridge Progression qualification examinations, from the OCR website. <http://www.ocr.org.uk/qualifications/by-type/functional-skills/>. JCQ ICE no longer covers Functional Skills.

Free online Level Checker (available via Interchange)

Initial assessment is an essential part of the learning process. So to help you, we now have an online Level Checker for use with our Functional Skills English, Maths and ICT* qualifications that can be accessed through Interchange. The online Level Checker can be used to determine the level of a learner's ability before moving on to pinpointing specific skills gaps. The auto-marking ensures that you get prompt results to support delivery for your learners.

*ICT assessment is currently only available through a paper-based test through Interchange.



Cambridge Traineeships

Cambridge Traineeships have been created to meet the Government's Traineeship initiative and help provide young people to gain the right skills and experience to progress onto an Apprenticeship scheme or into employment. <http://www.ocr.org.uk/qualifications/by-type/traineeships/>

Cambridge Technicals



Level 4 introduced

We have just launched our first **Level 4 Cambridge Technicals** qualification. The new Level 4 qualifications provide a progression route from Cambridge Technicals at Level 3. They can be achieved on a full-time or part-time basis – making them ideal for people in work wanting to improve their career prospects. The OCR Level 4 Cambridge Technical Diploma in IT is the first qualification now available for entries at this level. It will be joined by the Cambridge Technical Diploma in Health and Social Care very shortly. You can keep up with the latest changes on the qualification web pages. <http://www.ocr.org.uk/qualifications/by-type/cambridge-technicals/>

New Cambridge Technical in Science

This vocational qualification builds on **OCR's strong reputation** in science education. The science sector continues to innovate and grow, and this qualification aims to prepare students for a wide range of career opportunities in this sector. At Level 2 there are 15 units available. Level 3 is under development and will be available in 2014. <http://www.ocr.org.uk/qualifications/cambridge-technicals-science-level-2-certificate-extended-certificate-diploma-05783-05785-05788/>

Admin Guide to get a face lift

We are keen to improve the **VQ admin guide** and welcome your feedback.

We have decided to:

- Add a version control footer.
- Add a page detailing amends to the document.

We are considering changes to the entry codes section in particular:

- Making the entry codes section a rolling document – where we are notified of changes on an ongoing basis, rather than creating this section annually.
 - Adding in an Index. Do you have any suggestions of what type of Index would be most useful for EOs? E.g. by entry code, by qualification title?
- Add in links to the qualification webpages.
 - Changing the layout of the entry codes section. We could have:
 - o An interactive version, potentially to look like the fees list.
 - o An Excel version. The pro is that this is more easily searchable, but con is that it probably wouldn't look as professional as the above.
 - o A similar but improved version within Word – using some colour and different formatting.

Big questions we have that will inform the above are – how do EOs use the VQ guide? Do you print it off, save a version on your computer, or access it online every time you need to refer to it? If you have any insight we are very interested to know. cast@ocr.org.uk



Level 3 Performance 2016

The government's consultation response on **16 to 19 Vocational Qualification Reform** will mean that in future only high value vocational qualifications will be reported in school and college performance tables. Qualifications taught from September 2014 and reported in the 2016 performance tables will be categorised as either technical level or applied general qualifications.

Technical level qualifications

Technical level qualifications (which lead to recognised occupations, for example in engineering, IT, accounting or hospitality,) will need the public support of a professional body or 5 employers that represent the sector involved, and to be at least the size of an A level. When fully reformed, these qualifications will also need external assessment and grading, good take-up, a record of getting students into work or university and to involve employers locally, such as through work experience. Qualifications that are approved for teaching from September 2014, but do not meet all of these requirements, will have to be redeveloped by September 2015 for first teaching from September 2016.

Technical level qualifications that meet these requirements will count towards the new technical baccalaureate measure which is being introduced at the same time as these changes.

Applied general qualifications

Applied general qualifications (that provide a broader study of a vocational area) will need the public backing of three universities and to be at least the size of an AS level. These qualifications will also need external assessment and grading, good take-up and a record of getting students into university or work. Qualifications that are approved for teaching from September 2014, but do not meet all of these requirements, will have to be redeveloped by September 2015 for first teaching from September 2016. Awarding organisations will need to submit evidence that demonstrates how their qualifications meet the requirements by 13 September 2013. In the case of early years educator qualifications only, a special dispensation has been given to enable awarding organisations to meet the recommendations set out in the Nutbrown review. These qualifications will not have to be submitted until spring 2014.

Reporting and accreditation

Technical level and applied general qualifications will be reported in performance tables separately to academic qualifications, including A levels and AS levels, the international baccalaureate and the pre-u. <http://www.education.gov.uk/schools/teachingandlearning/qualifications/examsadmin/news/a00224333/techbacc>

OCR response: <http://www.ocr.org.uk/qualifications/by-type/vocational-education-and-skills/level-3-vocational-qualification-reform/>

DfE information: <http://www.education.gov.uk/childrenandyoungpeople/youngpeople/qandlearning/otherqualifications/a00222542/vocational-qualifications-16-19-year-olds>

DfE list of vocational qualifications for 14 – 19 year olds: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/vocational-qualifications-for-14-to-19-year-olds>