

Changes to Entry Level Qualifications

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Executive Summary



England: AS and A Levels

- First teaching of reformed A Levels from September 2015
- Reformed subjects include:
 - Biology
 - Chemistry
 - Physics
 - Computer Science

but not Mathematics/Further Mathematics or Design & Technology

- AS Level qualifications in reformed subjects will be available in 2016;
A Level qualifications in 2017
- Other subjects will follow from September 2016 and 2017
(Mathematics/Further Mathematics and D&T in 2017)



England: Reformed A/AS Levels

- AS Level and A Level are decoupled in reformed subjects
- Reformed A Levels are two-year linear qualifications with terminal examinations
- It is unclear how many schools/colleges will enter pupils for AS Levels in subjects they are taking the full A Level in
- For the next couple of admissions cycles, students will be applying with a mixture of reformed and old AS/A Level qualifications and with variable numbers of certificated Year 12 public examination results



England: A Levels: Science Practicals

- New A Levels in Biology, Chemistry and Physics will include a separate result for the practical element of the qualification
- 30% of the marks contributing to the overall grade used to be based on assessment of practical skills
- Now 15% of the written examination marks will assess understanding of practical work
- And practical skills will be assessed separately; students will carry out a minimum of 12 activities over the two years of an A Level
- Universities will need to state their policies concerning the practical component of Science A Levels in their entry requirements



England: GCSEs

- New GCSE specifications in English Language, English Literature and Mathematics will be taught from September 2015
- Many more subjects (including Biology, Chemistry, Combined Science [Dual Award], Computer Science, Physics) will have new specifications from September 2016
- Further subjects will follow from September 2017
- New GCSEs will be graded 1–9 with 9 being the highest grade
- It is expected that the same proportions of candidates that currently achieve grade C or better will achieve grade 4 or better



Northern Ireland: AS and A Levels

- Revised AS and A Levels will be first taught from September 2016
- AS Level will remain part of the A Level but its weighting will change:
AS Level will contribute 40% (rather than 50%)
- Marks for science practicals will continue to contribute to the overall A Level grade
- Reformed subjects include:
 - Biology, Chemistry, Physics
 - Computer Science
 - Technology & Design

but not Mathematics/Further Mathematics



Northern Ireland: AS and A Levels

- Northern Ireland will continue to have an open market for GCSE and A Level qualifications
- Schools will be able to make available to their students A Levels offered by AQA, OCR, Pearson and WJEC, but all science A Levels taken in Northern Ireland must have marks for the practical assessment contributing to the overall grade
- In 2014, CCEA had ~75% of the overall market share of A Levels in Northern Ireland



Northern Ireland: GCSEs

- Revised GCSEs will be first taught from September 2017
- Changes to CCEA GCSEs will focus largely on content
- The grading system for the revised GCSEs is still to be confirmed



Wales: Welsh Baccalaureate

- The Welsh Baccalaureate Advanced Diploma (WBAD) is an overarching qualification made up of the Welsh Baccalaureate Core (Level 3) and other supporting qualification
- The WBAD used to be Pass/Fail
- From first teaching in 2013 and award in 2015, the WBAD became a graded (A*–C) qualification
- From first teaching in 2015 and award in 2017, the new WBAD will become a “more rigorous” graded (A*–E) qualification



Wales: New Advanced Welsh Baccalaureate

- The new AWB will seek to develop a number of different skills through the completion of three challenges (in *Enterprise & Employability*, *Global Citizenship*, and *Community*) and an *Individual Project* (similar to the Extended Project Qualification)
- Students will still need to achieve supporting qualifications, such as A Levels and other Level 3 qualifications, in order to achieve the overall Baccalaureate



Wales: AS and A Levels

- Revised AS and A Levels will be first taught from September 2015
 - Reformed subjects include:
 - Biology, Chemistry, Physics
 - Computer Science
- but not Mathematics/Further Mathematics and D&T
- Other reformed subjects will be first taught from September 2016
 - Revised Mathematics/Further Mathematics and D&T AS and A Levels will be implemented in 2017



Wales: AS and A Levels

- As in Northern Ireland, AS Level will remain part of the A Level but its weighting will change: AS Level will contribute 40% (rather than 50%)
- Practical or controlled assessment will be retained in subjects where it plays an important role in assessing the subject and continue to contribute towards the final grade



Wales: GCSEs

- GCSEs in Wales will retain the current A*–G grading scale
- New GCSEs in Wales will be first taught from September 2015 in English Language, Welsh Language, Mathematics – Numeracy, and Mathematics
- It is expected that most pupils will study both Mathematics GCSE qualifications
- From September 2015 revised specifications will be taught in English Literature, and Welsh Literature
- New GCSEs will be first taught in Wales from September 2016 in several subjects including Biology, Chemistry and Physics



Scotland: Curriculum for Excellence

- In recent years, the education system in Scotland has undergone major reform as part of Curriculum for Excellence (C4E)
- C4E introduced a range of new qualifications in Scotland:
 - Standard Grade (General level) and Intermediate 1 qualifications have been replaced by National 4 qualifications (not graded)
 - Standard Grade (Credit level) and Intermediate 2 qualifications have been replaced by National 5 qualifications (graded A–D)
- New C4E Highers are being phased in from August 2014
- New C4E Advanced Highers are being taught from August 2015
- The grading system for Highers/Advanced Highers remains A–D



Vocational Qualifications at Level 3

- Changes to school performance tables (SPTs) are affecting Level 3 vocational qualifications
- 91% of the qualifications that used to count towards SPTs will not do so from 2016
- Vocational qualifications will now be classified as:
 - *Applied General* qualifications: designed for “students wanting to continue their education through applied learning”
 - *Tech Level* qualifications: qualifications that lead to a “recognised occupation”

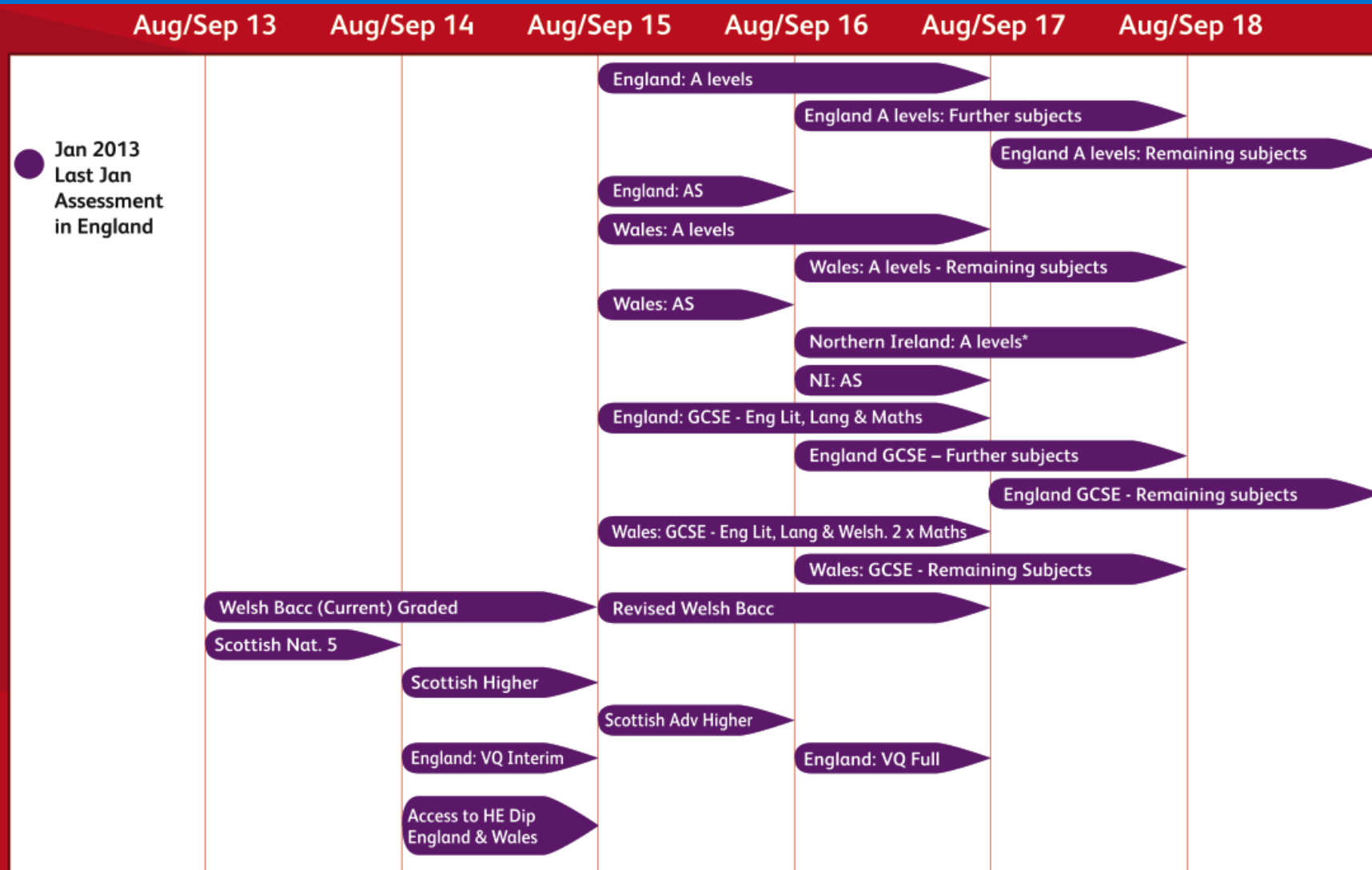


Vocational Qualifications at Level 3

- Reform is being conducted in two stages: *interim* and *full* stages
- Each stage will introduce new criteria to meet in order to count towards SPTs
- The first teaching of the qualifications reformed on an *interim* basis was from 2014; these will count towards SPTs in 2016
- Only qualifications that meet the *full* criteria will count towards SPTs from 2018
- Full reformed Tech Level qualifications must require at least 300 guided learning hours (GLH), cf. 360 GLH for an A Level
- BTEC qualifications in Engineering will continue to be available



Qualification Reforms Timeline



Key
 First teaching Reach HE