

25 June 2015

FAO: Northern Ireland centres only

Dear Colleague,

OCR has considered the requirement from the DENI for the assessment of practical skills to count towards the overall grade for A Level sciences in Northern Ireland (NI). We have met with representatives from some of our current NI centres, and considered a number of assessment models that might allow us to offer a variant of the English A Level science qualifications in NI. Unfortunately, we could not produce an economically viable model that did not involve a significant investigative element (this element being unacceptable to current NI centres). Without this element we don't have a model that will effectively discriminate across the ability range.

On this basis OCR will not be offering a NI variant for first teaching from September 2015.

OCR can, however, offer a solution to the 2015 'gap' year between the end of the current OCR science A Levels and the start of the next CCEA iteration. Although this has not been publicly announced, Ofqual will shortly consult on the resit arrangements for the outgoing A Levels. We will be expected to offer a resit-only opportunity to English centres for all units in summer 2017. CCEA Regulators have confirmed that they have approved a one year extension for our courses in NI, so we will make those units available to all candidates in NI centres in Summer 2017 (essentially extending our current course by one year in Northern Ireland). This is on the understanding that we will **not** provide any resit opportunity for NI candidates after Summer 2017, therefore candidates will need to have studied and be assessed on the new reformed CCEA specifications for the Summer 2018 series.

The qualifications for which this arrangement will apply in NI are:

Entry code	Qualification number	Qualification title	Last assessment opportunity (Northern Ireland)
H021	500/2269/6	OCR Advanced Subsidiary GCE in Biology	Summer 2017
H421	500/2236/2	OCR Advanced GCE in Biology	Summer 2017
H034	500/2425/5	OCR Advanced Subsidiary GCE in Chemistry A	Summer 2017
H434	500/2347/0	OCR Advanced GCE in Chemistry A	Summer 2017
H158	500/2603/3	OCR Advanced Subsidiary GCE in Physics A	Summer 2017
H558	500/2584/3	OCR Advanced GCE in Physics A	Summer 2017

Please contact me at the number above or by email if you need to clarify any of the information contained in this letter. Paul.mcglade@ocr.org.uk

In the meantime can I take this opportunity to wish you a pleasant Summer break.

Yours faithfully

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Paul Mc Glade", enclosed in a thin black rectangular border.

Paul Mc Glade
National Manager Ireland and Wales