



GCSE Mathematics – the move to linear specifications

From September 2012 students starting two-year GCSE courses will follow linear specifications. This move to linear specifications is being implemented in response to a decision made by the Secretary of State for Education. Ofqual has confirmed that the move to linear specifications will be the only alteration to GCSE Mathematics specifications. There will be no change to the content of specifications.

This change does not affect candidates who started a two-year course in September 2011, or those starting a one-year course in September 2012. However Year 9 students who started a three-year course in September 2011 will be affected.

From September 2012 all GCSE Mathematics examination units will be taken at the end of the course unless the course is completed prior to June 2014. The 100% terminal rule will apply to all GCSE Mathematics specifications certifying in June 2014 and beyond. The current 40% terminal rule will remain in place up to, and including, November 2013.

From 2014 onwards, GCSE Mathematics will be examined in the June and November series only.

A summary of the changes from 2012:

GCSE Mathematics A (J562)

- All units, A501, A502 and A503, will be taken in the terminal series, i.e. Year 10 students starting a two-year course in September 2012 will sit all of their examination papers in June 2014 and certificate at that time.
- From June 2014 onwards examinations will be available in the June and November series only. January examinations will no longer be available.
- Units A501 and A502 will be available in a single examination slot and A503 in a second examination slot.
- Centres will still be entitled to mix candidates' unit entries across Higher and Foundation tiers.
- Separate unit and certification entries will still be required.

GCSE Mathematics B (J567)

- This will remain a linear specification where both examination papers must be taken in the terminal series.
- From 2014 onwards examinations will be available in the June and November series only. March examinations will no longer be available.

BRINGING MATHS TO LIFE

Quality of Written Communication (QWC) in GCSE Mathematics

The assessment of Quality of Written Communication (QWC) will remain an integral part of GCSE Mathematics qualifications.

Timeline for the changes to GCSE Mathematics

| | Mathematics A (J562) | Mathematics B (J567) |
|--------------------------|--|--|
| September 2012 | First teaching of new two-year linear GCSE Mathematics specifications | |
| November 2012 | All GCSE Mathematics units, and certification, available but entry restricted to candidates certifying no later than Autumn 2013 | GCSE Mathematics B available for certification |
| January 2013 | All GCSE Mathematics units, and certification, available but entry restricted to candidates certifying no later than Autumn 2013 | |
| March 2013 | | GCSE Mathematics B available for certification |
| June 2013 | All GCSE Mathematics units, and certification, available but entry restricted to candidates certifying no later than Autumn 2013 | GCSE Mathematics B available for certification |
| November 2013 | All GCSE Mathematics units available but entry restricted to candidates certifying in this series | GCSE Mathematics B available for certification |
| January 2014 | Series is no longer used for GCSE examinations | |
| March 2014 | | Series is no longer used for GCSE examinations |
| June 2014 | First 100% terminal rule examination series. All GCSE Mathematics units offered | GCSE Mathematics B available for certification |
| November 2014 | Re-sit opportunity with 100% terminal rule in place for all GCSE Mathematics qualifications | |
| June 2015 onwards | GCSEs continue with 100% terminal rule | |



Frequently Asked Questions



- **Can Year 10 students, beginning the course in September 2012, take GCSE Mathematics in June 2013?**

Yes.

For GCSE Mathematics A (J562), as long as the terminal rule (40%) is met this is permitted. The linear GCSE, Mathematics B (J567) is available.

- **Can I enter Year 10 students starting GCSE Mathematics in September 2012 for the unatised specification in the January 2013 series, and certificate in June 2013 if necessary?**

Yes.

For GCSE Mathematics A (J562), students can take any of the units in January 2013 and sit the remaining units, and certificate, in June 2013 as long as the terminal rule (40%) is met. Candidates will have a final re-sit opportunity available in November 2013 before the 100% terminal rule is applied from June 2014 onwards.

- **Can students who take the examinations in June re-sit in November if necessary?**

For GCSE Mathematics there will be a re-sit examination series in November each year. So a student entering for certification in GCSE Mathematics in June 2013 can re-sit the complete qualification in November 2013. This arrangement will continue from 2014 onwards.

- **For Specification A (J562) will candidates still be able to mix the tiers of units?**

The new structure will require all examination papers to be taken in the same series but the ability to mix tiers is being retained.

- **For how long will the current GCSE Mathematics specifications remain unchanged?**

The National Curriculum Review is currently making its recommendations to Government, and GCSE criteria form part of the review. It is anticipated that GCSE Mathematics will be updated to meet the revised criteria, with new specifications available for first teaching from September 2015.

- **Can GCSE Mathematics still be completed in one year?**

Yes, where appropriate, it will still be possible to complete GCSE Mathematics in one year as long as the relevant terminal rule is met.

If you have any questions about the move to linear specifications please contact your Regional Account Manager
www.ocr.org.uk/contactus/ram

GENERAL QUALIFICATIONS

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