

1 September 2015

FAO: Northern Ireland centres only

Dear Colleague,

As you may be aware, OCR has developed a new GCSE English Language qualification available to schools in England from September 2015. During the development process, we have considered the requirement from the DENI that all GCSE English qualifications offered in schools in Northern Ireland must have a mark for speaking and listening that contributes to the overall GCSE grade. Unfortunately, we concluded that we could not produce an economically viable assessment model for the new qualification that enabled us to meet this requirement. On this basis OCR will not be offering a NI variant of GCSE English Language for first teaching from September 2015.

However, CCEA Regulators have approved a one year extension for our current GCSE English Language (NI) J345 qualification which meets the DENI speaking and listening requirements. This qualification will therefore be available to all candidates in NI centres until June 2017. This is on the understanding that we will **not** provide any retake opportunity for NI candidates after this series, therefore the last opportunity for examination and certification for the J345 specification, including retakes, is June 2017.

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

Entry code	Qualification number	Qualification title	Last assessment opportunity including retakes (Northern Ireland)
J345	500/7933/5	OCR GCSE English Language (NI)	June 2017

We have produced new controlled assessment tasks for submission in summer 2017. The new tasks for units A631 and A632 Section B will be available on Interchange by the end of September. Please accept our apologies for the delay in the release of these tasks, the process had to be delayed whilst extension arrangements were confirmed. These tasks must be used for submission and certification in 2017. The requirements for the three speaking and listening tasks for unit A632 Section A will not change.

Please be aware that the limit of this extension does mean that there will be a 'gap' year between the end of the OCR's GCSE English Language (NI) J345 qualification and the start of the next CCEA iteration for first teaching in 2017 and first assessment in 2019. This means that any centres in NI that are continuing with our J345 specification until June 2017 will need to switch to the current CCEA GCSE English Language qualification in September 2016 (for a 2-year course) or September 2017 (for a 1-year course) in order to provide candidates with an assessment opportunity in 2018.

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

Yours faithfully



Paul Mc Glade
National Manager Ireland and Wales