




# GCSE (9–1) Separate Sciences A and B

## Tiering Guide for Parents and Students

### Will my certificate show the tier I sat?

Certificates do not show the tier of entry; they only show the grade achieved.

### KEY

-  Higher Tier only
-  Higher and Foundation Tier
-  Foundation Tier only

The highest grade available on the Foundation Tier is 5

### Is it easier to get a 5 on Higher Tier?

Each tier contains 20% common questions. This is used by exam boards to align the standards between tiers. This ensures that it is not easier to get a 4 or 5 on one tier than another.

**50% OF MARKS**  
in Foundation Tier papers cover grades from 5 to 3

**50% OF MARKS**  
in Foundation Tier papers cover grades from 3 to 1

### Which tier should I be entered for if I just achieve a 5 in my mock?

If you only just got enough marks for a 5, it is recommended that you should take Foundation tier papers. Students who are aiming for a 5 are able to access at least twice as many marks in the Foundation Tier papers.

9

8

7

6

5

4

3

2

1

U

**50% OF MARKS**  
in Higher Tier papers cover grades from 9 to 7

**50% OF MARKS**  
in Higher Tier papers cover grades from 6 to 4

On the Higher Tier there is an allowed 3 grade for candidates who just miss the 4 grade

There is no UMS in the reformed GCSE. Therefore candidates who miss the allowed 3 grade on the Higher Tier receive a U

### What happens if I don't get a 4?

On the Higher Tier, if you don't get a 4 and miss the safety net of a few marks, you will get a U on your certificate. In 2019, just under 4,500 students got a U across all exam boards.

### Can I take Foundation Tier papers for some of my Science exams?

As exams are just at the end of year 11 (no modules) each Science subject has to be taken at the same tier. So you could sit Foundation tier for one Science, and Higher tier for the other two Sciences.

### What is recommended?

Ofqual recommend that if a student is expected to get a 4 or 5, they should take the Foundation tier papers.

The advice provided on this sheet is based on feedback received from teachers and advice from Ofqual, and is **for guidance only**. Teachers are best placed to make decisions for their students. The Ofqual blog containing their advice and the statistics used in this resource can be found [here](#).

## OCR Resources: *the small print*

OCR's resources are provided to support the delivery of OCR qualifications, but in no way constitute an endorsed teaching method that is required by OCR. Whilst every effort is made to ensure the accuracy of the content, OCR cannot be held responsible for any errors or omissions within these resources. We update our resources on a regular basis, so please check the OCR website to ensure you have the most up to date version.

This resource may be freely copied and distributed, as long as the OCR logo and this small print remain intact and OCR is acknowledged as the originator of this work.

Our documents are updated over time. Whilst every effort is made to check all documents, there may be contradictions between published support and the specification, therefore please use the information on the latest specification at all times. Where changes are made to specifications these will be indicated within the document, there will be a new version number indicated, and a summary of the changes. If you do notice a discrepancy between the specification and a resource please contact us at: [resources.feedback@ocr.org.uk](mailto:resources.feedback@ocr.org.uk).

OCR acknowledges the use of the following content: N/A

Whether you already offer OCR qualifications, are new to OCR, or are considering switching from your current provider/awarding organisation, you can request more information by completing the Expression of Interest form which can be found here: [www.ocr.org.uk/expression-of-interest](http://www.ocr.org.uk/expression-of-interest)

Please get in touch if you want to discuss the accessibility of resources we offer to support delivery of our qualifications: [resources.feedback@ocr.org.uk](mailto:resources.feedback@ocr.org.uk)

## Looking for a resource?

There is now a quick and easy search tool to help find **free** resources for your qualification:

[www.ocr.org.uk/i-want-to/find-resources/](http://www.ocr.org.uk/i-want-to/find-resources/)



## Would you prefer a Word version?

Did you know that you can save this pdf as a Word file using Acrobat Professional?

Simply click on **File > Export to** and select **Microsoft Word**

(If you have opened this PDF in your browser you will need to save it first. Simply right click anywhere on the page and select **Save as...** to save the PDF. Then open the PDF in Acrobat Professional.)

If you do not have access to Acrobat Professional there are a number of **free** applications available that will also convert PDF to Word (search for *pdf to word converter*).



## We value your feedback

We'd like to know your view on the resources we produce. By clicking on the icon above you will help us to ensure that our resources work for you.



Cambridge  
Assessment



OCR is part of Cambridge Assessment, a department of the University of Cambridge. *For staff training purposes and as part of our quality assurance programme your call may be recorded or monitored.*

© **OCR 2020** Oxford Cambridge and RSA Examinations is a Company Limited by Guarantee. Registered in England. Registered office The Triangle Building, Shaftesbury Road, Cambridge, CB2 8EA. Registered company number 3484466. OCR is an exempt charity.