



**Nick Gibb MP**  
Minister of State for School Reform

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Thank you for your letter of 17 October, providing advice on the reformed A levels in mathematics and further mathematics, and for the further advice in your letter of 31 October. I have also found our conversations on this topic enormously valuable and constructive.

I think we agree that the content for the reformed A levels, developed with the expert advice of the A level Content Advisory Board (ALCAB), will compare favourably with the world's best education systems, equipping students to meet the demands of universities and employers. In designing the qualifications, I know that the ALCAB mathematics panel has found the consultation process very helpful in conveying the views of subject experts in the wider mathematics community. I am determined to see ALCAB's intentions carried through into practice, and I am therefore pleased that the panel has been able to take account of the views of teachers and awarding organisations. I am also very grateful for Ofqual's advice throughout the process.

I have considered carefully the timing of the introduction of the reformed A and AS levels in mathematics and further mathematics. While there is a transitional phase for all reformed subjects, you have advised that for mathematics the gap between the current GCSE and the new A level is particularly significant. Your concern is that the current GCSE does not have the same building blocks as the new GCSE to prepare students for the

mathematical problem-solving content in the new A level. I know your view is supported by ALCAB and by many in the mathematics community.

I am content to accept your recommendation to defer first teaching of the new mathematics and further mathematics A/AS levels until September 2017. I have taken this decision to give mathematics students the best opportunity to benefit from the new qualifications at GCSE and A level, and in particular recognition of the importance of mathematics as a route to a wide range of valuable higher education courses.

Once again, thank you very much for your advice.

With best wishes.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Yours sincerely Nick Gibb". The signature is written in a cursive style.

**Nick Gibb MP**