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New and refreshed resources to help explain GCSE and A level reforms

Dear Headteacher

I last wrote to you in November 2016 to ask for your help in raising awareness and understanding of the new GCSE grading structure. While there is a good level of understanding among teachers, we know from our own research that understanding is weaker among parents and employers.

Therefore, firstly, I would like to let you know that we have added to, and refreshed, our existing resources that explain the changes to GCSEs, AS and A levels, and we would welcome all the assistance you can give us in reaching these other audiences. In particular, we recently launched a set of films to help raise awareness and understanding specifically of the new 9 to 1 GCSE grades. The [films are available on YouTube](#), and are embedded in our dedicated [Facebook](#) and [LinkedIn](#) pages. These films complement our [collection of postcards](#) that I know many of you have previously found useful.

Secondly, I would like to assure you that the way we use statistics each summer will ensure that the cohort taking new qualifications this year will not be disadvantaged compared to previous years. In terms of the new GCSEs, this means that broadly the same proportion of students will get grades 1, 4 and 7 and above in any subject as would have got grades G, C or A and above respectively in the old system. And at A level, exam boards will use predictions to make sure that broadly the same proportion of students achieve grades A*, A and E. National results will remain stable, but the changes are likely to mean individual schools and colleges will see more variation compared to last year.

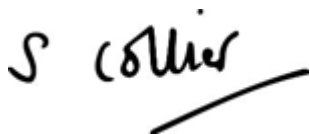
On that point, I am aware that many of you are keen to know what the grade boundaries will be for the new subjects. Even in well-established qualifications, however, grade boundaries are never set in advance. Exam boards will wait until the students have taken their exams, and their work has been marked, to compare their performance to that of previous cohorts, and then set the grade boundaries. 2017 is no different. We are publishing [new blogs on some of these more technical issues](#) regularly through to exams starting and we would encourage you to look out for them.

You can also subscribe to our newsletter - '[Exam Matters](#)' - for summaries.

Finally, you may be aware of the new 'standard pass' (grade 4) and 'strong pass' (grade 5) terminology adopted by the Department for Education that was announced by the Secretary of State for Education in her [letter to the Education Select Committee](#) this week. We have refreshed our [slide pack](#), produced jointly with the Department to reflect these changes.

If there are any issues on which you would like us to provide more information or you simply have a question, please contact us at public.enquiries@ofqual.gov.uk or on 0300 303 3344.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "S Collier". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long horizontal stroke underneath the name.

Sally Collier
Chief Regulator