

March 2018

Dear Head,

GCSE science grades: new explanatory resources

As you will be aware, another [20 new GCSEs](#) will be graded from 9 to 1 this summer, in addition to English language, English literature and maths. Those being taken for the first time this year include biology, chemistry and physics, and combined science.

We are keen to raise awareness among parents, pupils and employers of the way in which these science subjects will be awarded. Students taking the single science GCSEs will receive a single 9 to 1 grade for each subject, in the same way as for other reformed GCSEs. Students taking the combined science qualification will receive an award worth 2 GCSEs. It will consist of two equal or adjacent grades from 9 to 1, giving 17 possible grade combinations – for example, (9-9); (9-8); (8-8) through to (1-1).

We considered a 9-point scale from 9-9 to 1-1 but we believed it would be unfair for students to lose (or gain) two whole grades at each grade boundary. After all, a student studying single sciences who just misses a grade 5 by one mark in biology would not also lose their grade 5 in physics or chemistry.

Explanatory resources

We have produced some new resources, and refreshed others, which we hope you will find useful for answering questions from pupils and parents. They include:

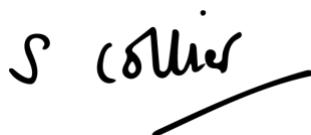
- a **film** that explains that how combined science will be graded, and that it is worth two GCSEs. You can [watch the film here](#).
- a **'postcard'** in conjunction with this film, which you can find as part of our [postcard pack here](#). The film and postcard draw on the same themes as those we promoted last year for the introduction of the new 9 to 1 grading system, and which we [updated in December](#).
- a **poster** that you may wish to print and put up around your school [here](#).
- a **PowerPoint presentation** that you might consider using at parent evenings or teacher training events. You can [view it here](#).

I hope you find these resources useful and will consider circulating them in newsletters or in other communications with pupils and parents.

You can find more resources and information by subscribing to our ['9 to 1 news'](#) newsletter. And if you have any suggestions about other resources you think would be of benefit, please do not hesitate to contact us at: public.enquiries@ofqual.gov.uk.

Thank you for your continued support.

Yours sincerely,



Sally Collier
Chief Executive, Ofqual