



**The Rt Hon Bridget Phillipson MP**  
Secretary of State for Education

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Sir Ian Bauckham CBE  
Interim Chief Regulator at The Office of Qualifications and Examinations Regulation

3 October 2024

Dear Sir Ian,

I am writing today regarding the Department for Education's subject content for GCSE qualifications in mathematics, physics and combined science.

Evidence shows that the COVID-19 pandemic continues to have an impact on students, who missed out on vital years of education and development and stakeholders have raised concerns that removing the support which formulae and equation sheets have provided in recent years is premature. I am also conscious that the Independent Review of Curriculum and Assessment will report next year and advise on long term changes to our curriculum and assessment system to more fully capture young people's knowledge and abilities, whilst maintaining the important role of public examinations.

On the basis of this evidence, I have concluded that the approach taken in 2022, 2023 and 2024 should continue, and therefore that students will not need to memorise the usual formulae and equations for GCSE mathematics, physics and combined science qualifications being taken in 2025, 2026 and 2027. Students will continue to be expected to understand and use these formulae and equations, maintaining high standards for what students must study.

Therefore, I would like Ofqual to consider continuing arrangements that provide support to students in GCSE mathematics, physics and combined sciences exams in 2025, 2026 and 2027. Following this, we anticipate there may be future changes resulting from the Independent Review.

I understand that in order to change its rules for assessment Ofqual would need to consult publicly, as in previous years, on any changes for these subjects in 2025, 2026 and 2027.

I look forward to working with you over the coming months.

Yours sincerely,

**The Rt Hon Bridget Phillipson MP**  
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